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A new experience in adult fantasy and science-fiction adventure

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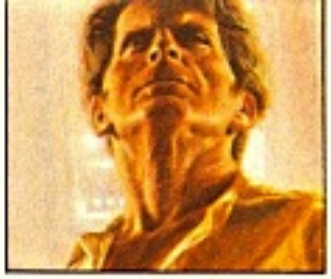

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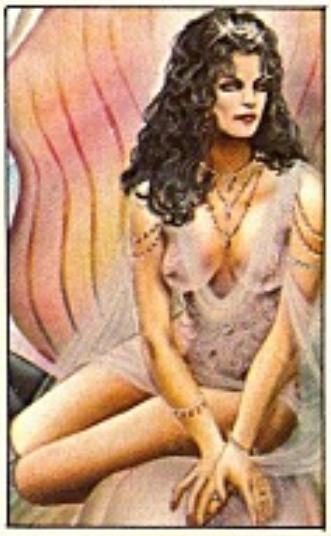

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WE HAVE COME THIS FAR. WE MUST GO FURTHER. WE MUST LEARN THE ANSWER.

NONE THAT LIVE CAN KNOW THE ANSWER.
NOT EVEN YOU?
I AM GALACTUS. THOUGH I AM MORE THAN MAN, STILL AM I LESS THAN GOD.

AND I AM BUT YOUR HERALD--LESS THAN A FLEETING FLYSPECK ON THE ENDLESS TAPESTRY OF SPACE.
BUT EVEN A FLYSPECK CAN YEARN TO KNOW--TO DISCOVER--TO LEARN THE ANSWER.

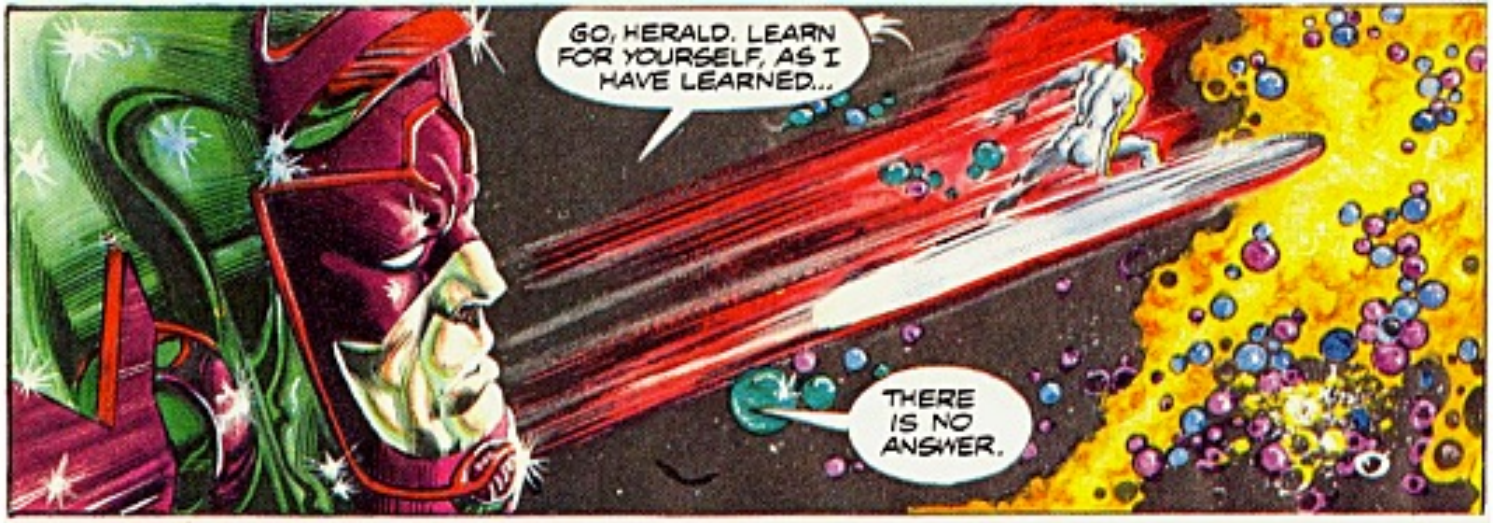
THERE IS NO ANSWER.

YOU LIE! THERE IS NO PERFECT SECRET! THERE IS NO LOCK WITHOUT A KEY!

I AM A STRANGER TO UNTRUTH. MINE IS THE POWER ABSOLUTE. GALACTUS HAS NO CAUSE TO LIE.
THEN JOIN ME IN THE QUEST. LET US SEE WHAT LIES BEYOND THE COSMOS. ONLY WE CAN FIND THE ANSWER.
THERE IS NO ANSWER.

I SPEAK THE TRUTH. AND YET, I KNOW THE GNAWING DOUBT, THE SEETHING AGONY THAT BURNS WITHIN YOUR BREAST. IN AGES PAST, GALACTUS, TOO, HAS FELT SUCH YEARNING.
GO, THEN. SEEK THE ANSWER IF YOU MUST.
I MUST.

THE POWER COSMIC IS MINE TO COMMAND-- TO STRIP AWAY THE FINAL VEIL OF DARKNESS.
AT LAST I'LL SEE WHAT WAITS BEYOND THE FARTHEST STAR--WHAT LIES BEYOND THE BRINK OF TIME ITSELF.


GO, HERALD. LEARN FOR YOURSELF, AS I HAVE LEARNED...
THERE IS NO ANSWER.

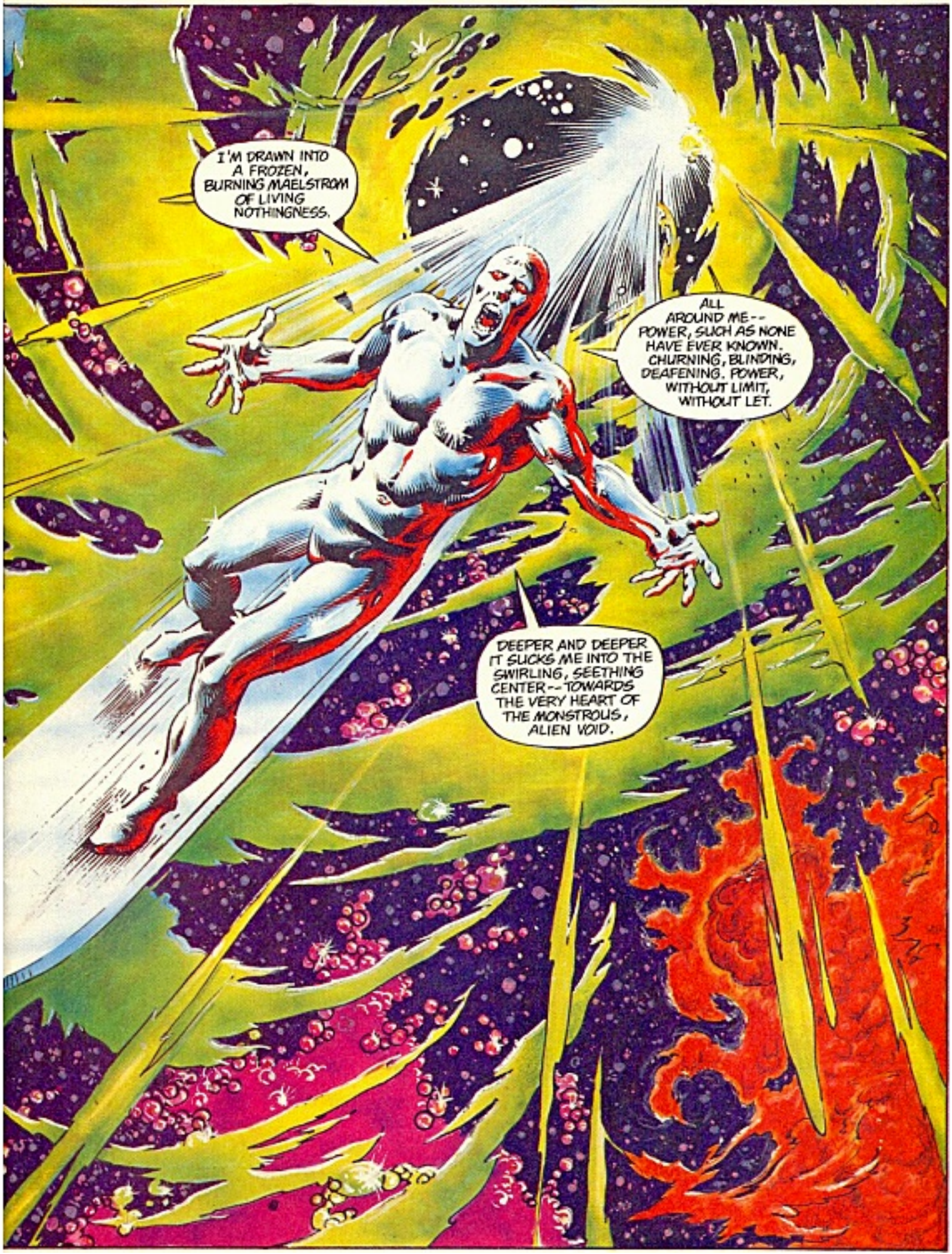
I'LL GO WHERE NONE HAVE EVER BEEN. I'LL SEE WHAT NONE HAVE EVER SEEN.

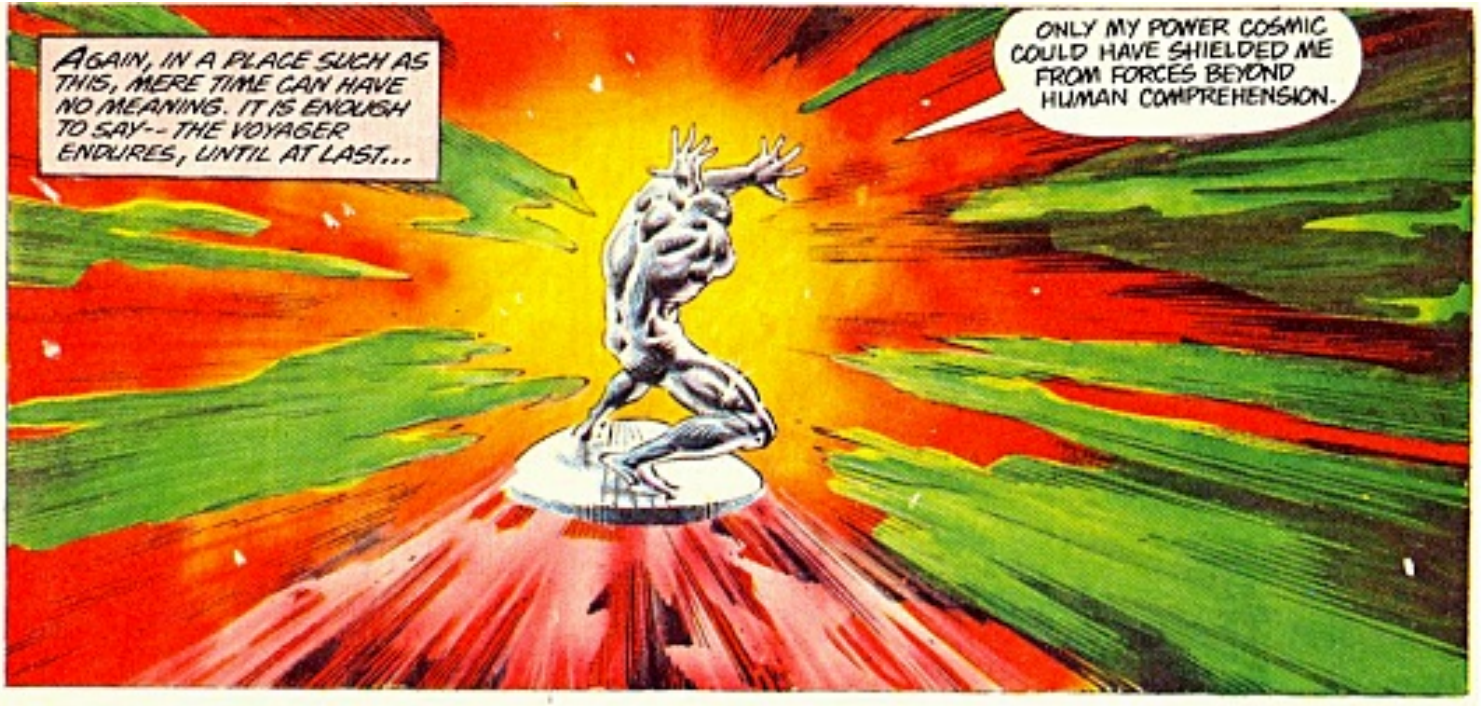
AND I'LL NOT TURN BACK-- THOUGH DEATH ITSELF SHOULD BAR THE WAY.

LATER. HOURS, DAYS, OR YEARS. THEY HAVE LITTLE MEANING IN DEEPEST SPACE.
THERE IS WHAT I SEEK. THE MOST BAFFLING SIGHT IN ALL THE HEAVENS--
AN EVER-GROWING, EVER-SWELLING FISSURE IN THE FABRIC OF SPACE ITSELF. A BLACK HOLE.
ONLY THERE, WITHIN ITS STYGIAN CORE, CAN ANTI-MATTER EXIST.

ONLY THERE WILL I FIND THE ENTRANCE TO ANOTHER UNIVERSE --THE SECRET OF INFINITY.

HOW CAN WE, WITH MERELY MORTAL SKILLS, REVEAL THE UNREVEALABLE? HOW CAN YOU, WITH MERELY MORTAL EYES, BEHOLD THE UNBEHOLDABLE?
WHAT YOU SEE BEFORE YOU IS BUT A PALE AND GOSSAMER REPRESENTATION OF THE MOST INDESCRIBABLY AWESOME JOURNEY EVER DARED.

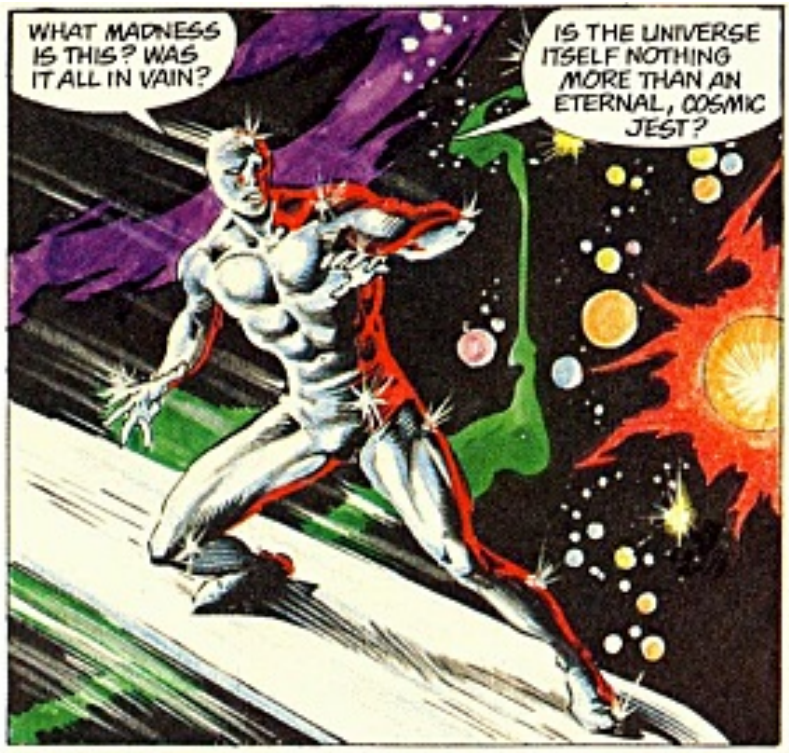

I'M DRAWN INTO A FROZEN, BURNING MAELSTROM OF LIVING NOTHINGNESS.
ALL AROUND ME -- POWER, SUCH AS NONE HAVE EVER KNOWN. CHURNING, BLINDING, DEAFENING. POWER, WITHOUT LIMIT, WITHOUT LET.
DEEPER AND DEEPER IT SUCKS ME INTO THE SWIRLING, SEETHING CENTER -- TOWARDS THE VERY HEART OF THE MONSTROUS, ALIEN VOID.


AGAIN, IN A PLACE SUCH AS THIS, MERE TIME CAN HAVE NO MEANING. IT IS ENOUGH TO SAY-- THE VOYAGER ENDURES, UNTIL AT LAST...
ONLY MY POWER COSMIC COULD HAVE SHIELDED ME FROM FORCES BEYOND HUMAN COMPREHENSION.

BUT NOW, THE PRESSURE EASES. MY SPEED SLACKENS. THE JOURNEY NEARS ITS END.

ALL IS QUIET. I'VE REACHED MY GOAL.
WHEN NEXT MY EYES ARE OPENED, I'LL BEHOLD WHAT MAN HAS NEVER SEEN.

AND NOW, TO GAZE UPON THE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIV--
NO
NO
NO!


WHAT MADNESS IS THIS? WAS IT ALL IN VAIN?
IS THE UNIVERSE ITSELF NOTHING MORE THAN AN ETERNAL, COSMIC JEST?

OR, BY SOME POWER KNOWN ONLY TO YOURSELF, HAVE YOU REACHED THE GOAL BEFORE ME?

THERE IS NO GOAL. I HAVE NOT MOVED.

IT CANNOT BE! THERE MUST BE SOMETHING-- SOMEWHERE--
I TRIED TO WARN YOU.

WARN ME OF WHAT? SPEAK, GALACTUS.

MAN HAS ALWAYS KNOWN THE ANSWER. HAS IT NOT BEEN CHRONICLED IN SCIENCE, SONG, AND LEGEND SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME?
TIME AND SPACE ARE ONE. HERE IS THERE. THEN IS NOW. AND GOD IS ALL.
I SEARCHED FOR A PLACE. BUT THERE IS NO PLACE.
AT LAST I UNDERSTAND.
THE ANSWER LIES-- WITHIN US.

HOMESPUN
SEE?! SEE?! PETALWING FIND NEW STILLQUIET THING FOR PUT IN WRAPSTUFF!
FURSOFT CRADLEBABY SLEEP IN OLD BIRDBASKET!
IS PRETTY!
IS EASY-CATCH!
IS GOOD ALL OVER?
PETALWING KNOWS! PETALWING LOOKED!
IS NOT HURT--
--NOT DEAD--
--JUST STILLQUIET!
HUSHUP NOW!
TIME WE MAKE WRAPSTUFF!

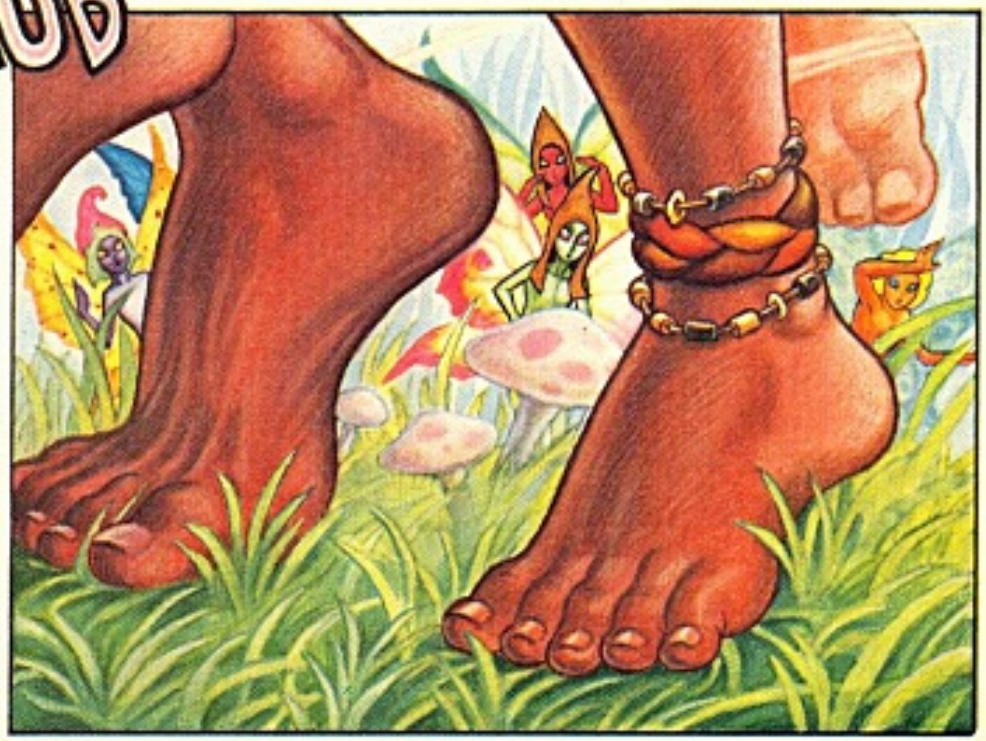
ONCE, THESE TINY, SEXLESS BEINGS CALLED THEMSELVES THE PRESERVERS...
BUT THAT WAS VERY LONG AGO, WHEN THEY COULD STILL REMEMBER WHO AND WHY THEY WERE!

NOW THEY SPIN THEIR SHIMMERING WEBS WITHOUT RHYME OR REASON--

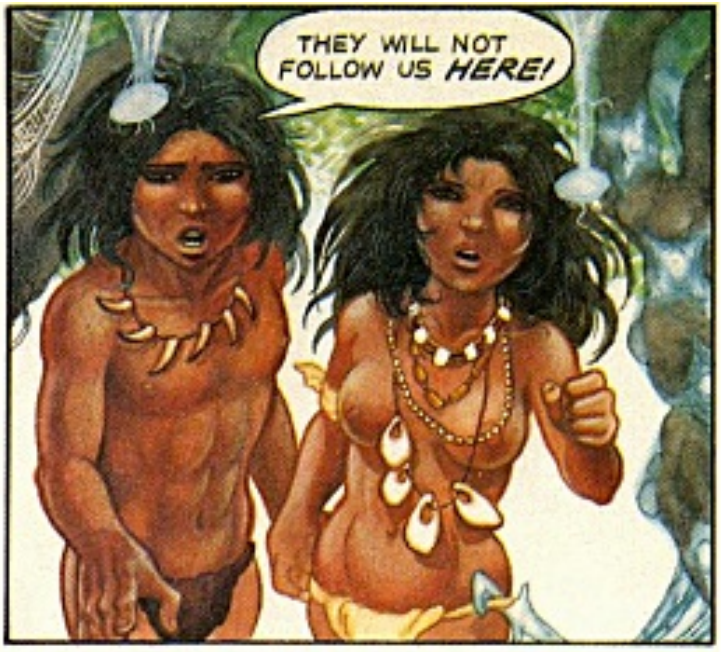
--AND THE VERDANT VALLEY IN WHICH THEY DWELL IS SILVERED OVER WITH MYRIAD LUSTROUS COCOONS!
COCOONS WHICH THE PRESERVERS TEND WITH INFINITE CARE--

--BUT WHICH NEVER, NEVER HATCH!
SKRASH!
WHUZZAT?!

THUD THUD
(GASP!)
BIGTHINGS!



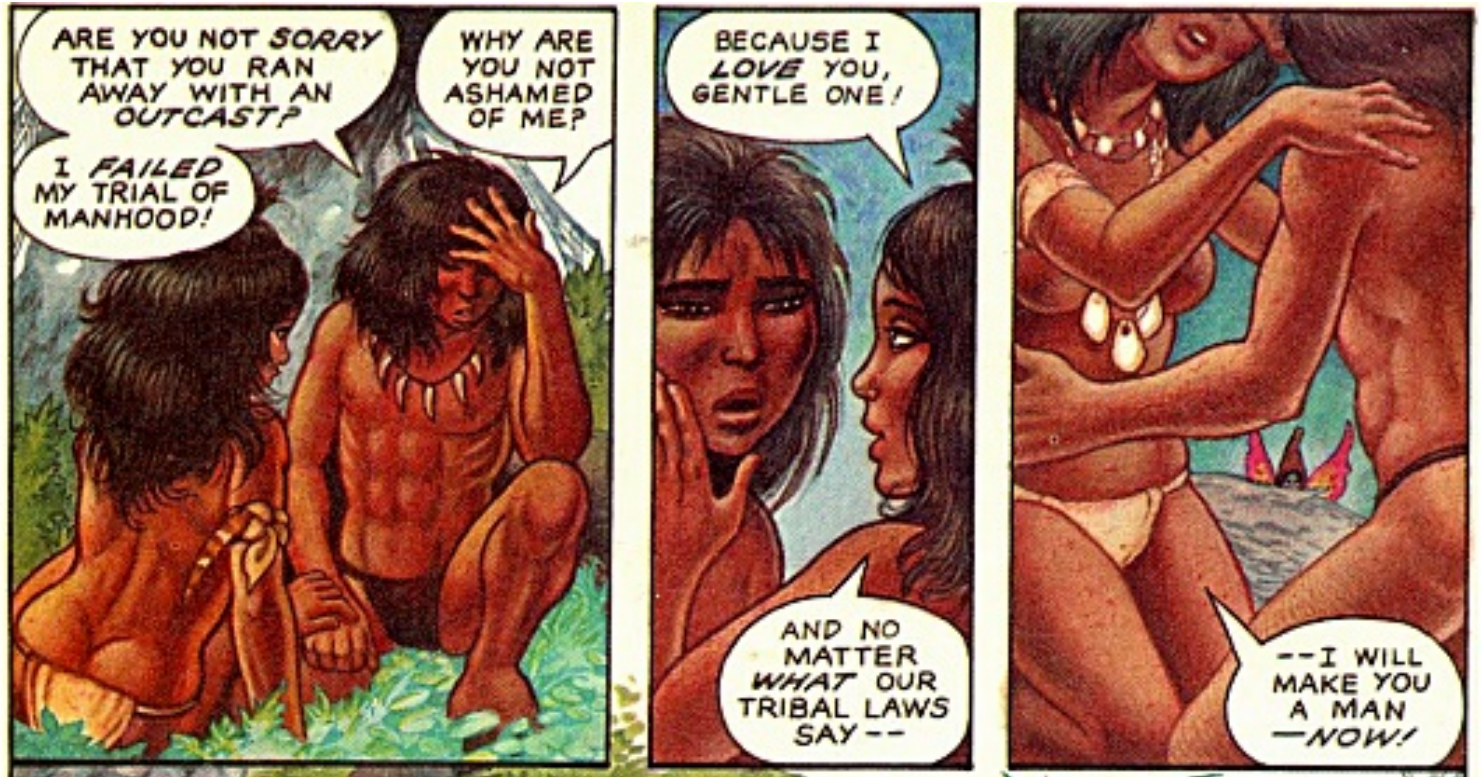
PANT, PANT! KEEP RUNNING, SELAH!
THIS IS THE FORBIDDEN GROVE!


THEY WILL NOT FOLLOW US HERE!

LOOK! BIGTHINGS MESSING UP OUR HANGEY-DOWNS!

AGH! THE TREES THEM-SELVES TRY TO SNARE US!
I-I CANNOT BEAR THE TOUCH OF THESE STICKY WEBS!
MALAK, HELP ME!

FORGIVE ME! NEVER BEFORE HAVE I SQUIRMED LIKE A CHILD AT THE WORK OF A SPIDER!
YOU ARE BRAVER THAN I, SELAH!
SEE HOW I TREMBLE!


ARE YOU NOT SORRY THAT YOU RAN AWAY WITH AN OUTCAST?
WHY ARE YOU NOT ASHAMED OF ME?
I FAILED MY TRIAL OF MANHOOD!
BECAUSE I LOVE YOU, GENTLE ONE!
AND NO MATTER WHAT OUR TRIBAL LAWS SAY --
--I WILL MAKE YOU A MAN —NOW!

LULLED INTO A MOMENT'S BLISS BY THE STILLNESS AND GOSSAMER BEAUTY OF THE PLACE --
--MALAK AND SELAH ARE OBLIVIOUS TO ALL BUT THEIR OWN ENFLAMED SENSES!

SUDDENLY...
AROOOOOOO
AROOOOOOO
OH! MY FATHER'S HUNTING HORN!
HE KNOWS WE ARE HERE!
D-DO YOU THINK HE WILL BREAK TABOO AND ENTER THE FORBIDDEN GROVE?
WE DID..!
OLBAR THE MOUNTAINOUS SOUNDS THE NOTES THAT SIGNAL CORNERED PREY!
HIS ANGER IS AS GREAT AS HIS STATURE, FOR SELAH HAS DARED TO DEFY HIM!
THEIR TRAIL IS CLEAR!
WE HAVE ONLY TO FOLLOW!
I WILL KILL MALAK WITH MY OWN HANDS WHEN I CATCH HIM!
WAIT, OLBAR! WHAT OF THE DEMONS THAT DWELL HERE?
WE DARE NOT RISK THEIR ANGER!
YES! MALAK AND SELAH MAY ALREADY HAVE PAID FOR DISTURBING THEM!
THEN LET THE DEMONS BEWARE OLBAR!!
I WILL HEAR NO MORE WARNINGS!
FOLLOW!!
THEY COME! WHAT ARE WE TO DO?
WE MUST RUN, MY LOVE, UNTIL OUR HEARTS BREAK!
BETTER TO DIE IN FLIGHT THAN TO BE CAPTURED NOW!

STAY, BIG-THINGS!
WE HELP YOU!
=GASP= EVIL SPIRITS!

EVIL..? NO, MALAK, I DO NOT THINK SO!
STAY!
WE CHASE BAD BIG-THINGS AWAY!

PETALWING GIVES A KEENING WAR CRY, AND SUDDENLY THE AIR IS FILLED WITH MANY MORE OF THE TINY, MULTI-COLORED WONDERS!
ARMED WITH STINGING THORNS THE PRESERVERS FLY GLEEFULLY INTO BATTLE--

--AS OLBAR'S PARTY PLUNGES HEEDLESSLY THROUGH LABORIOUSLY WROUGHT STREAMERS OF DELICATE WEBBING!
YACH!! MY EYES! =COUGH= MY MOUTH!
THESE WEBS ARE DEMON'S WORK!

CURSE THE LEGENDS!
TEAR THEM DOWN!!

THE YOUNG ONES MUST NOT ESCAPE..!

AARGH!!

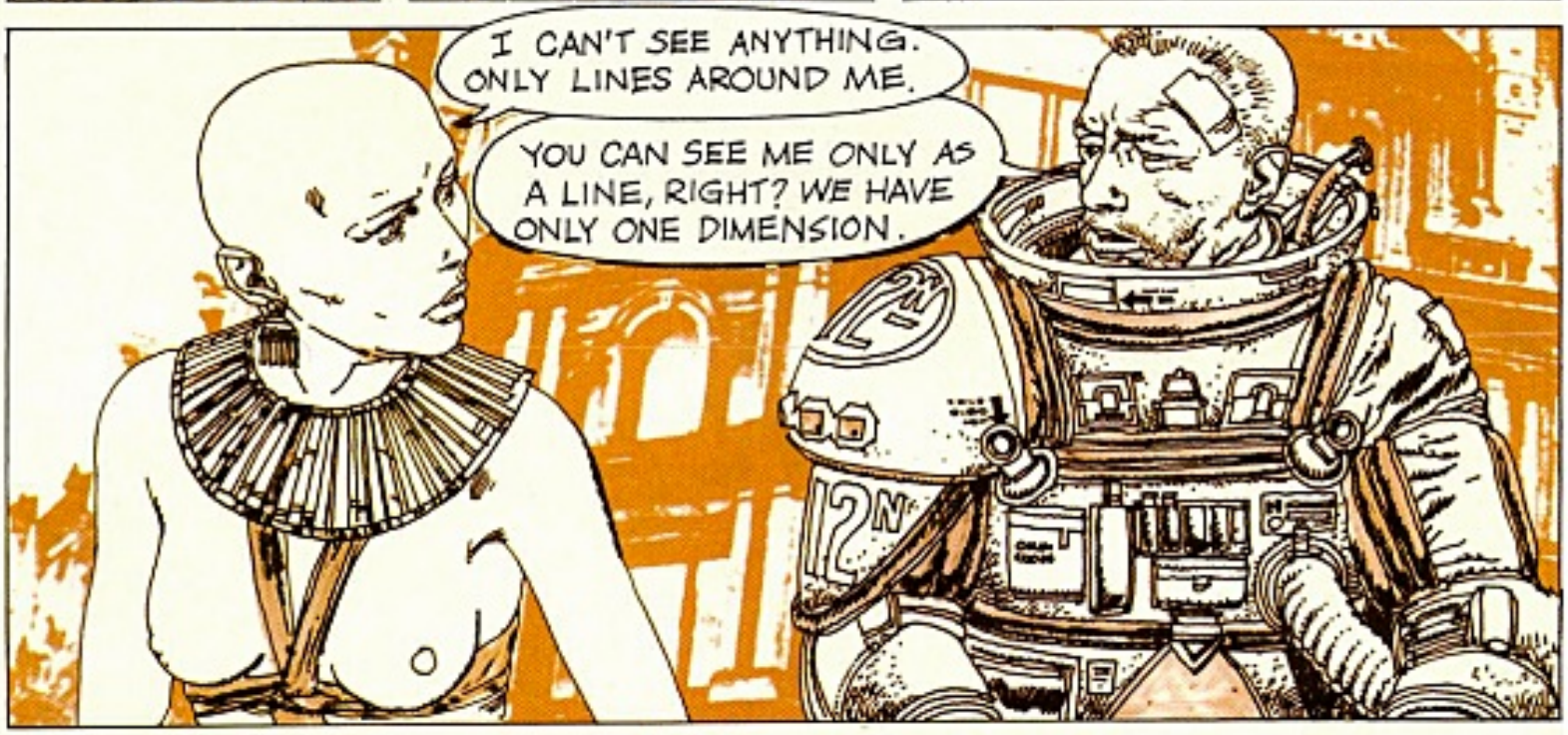
INSTANTLY, DIMINUTIVE WINGED BEINGS SWARM AROUND THE TERRIFIED HUMANS!
AAGRFF!!
MY EYES!!
THE DEMONS HAVE BLINDED ME!!
CLUMSY SPEARS PROVE USELESS AGAINST FOES SO SMALL AND SO SWIFT!
THE BATTLE IS BRIEF AND UNEVEN, FOR THE HUMANS' OWN FEARS WORK AGAINST THEM!
N-NO! GO AWAY!!
AT LAST EVEN OLBAR THE MOUNTAINOUS LEARNS THAT THE OLD LEGENDS POSSESS MORE THAN A GRAIN OF TRUTH!
TAKE MALAK AND SELAH— AND BE DONE!!
NOISYBAD BIGTHINGS COME BACK NO MORE!
LET US LIVE, O ANGRY SPIRITS!!

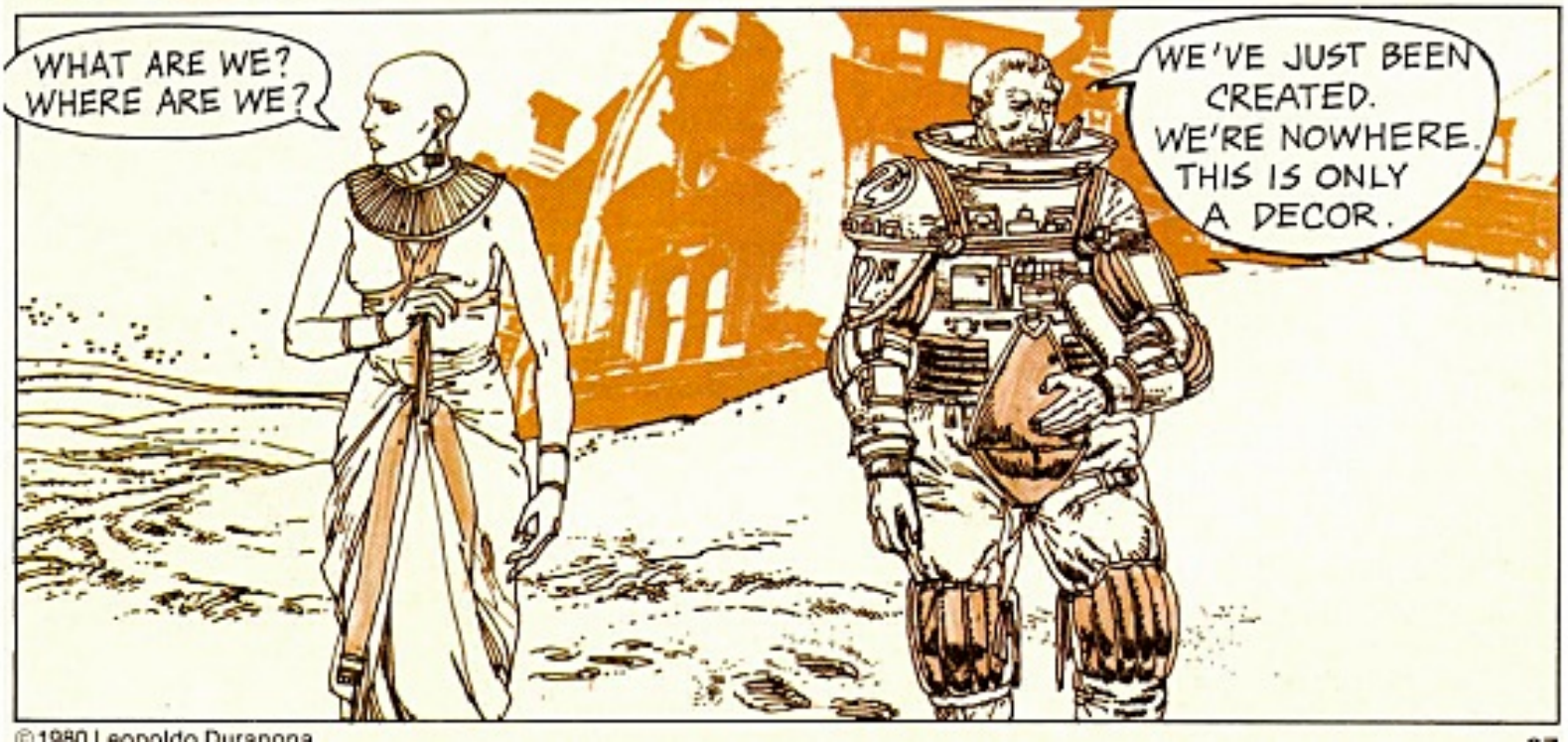
WE ARE GRATEFUL, LITTLE SPIRITS!
AND WE WILL TELL OUR CHILDREN THAT THE LEGENDS ARE WRONG!
NOW SELAH AND I CAN LIVE IN PEACE IN A PLACE OF OUR OWN CHOOSING!
THE SPIRITS OF THIS VALLEY ARE NOT EVIL--
--BUT GOOD AND HELPFUL!

YAWN! WE SHALL SLEEP HERE, MY LOVE...
TOMORROW IS OUR NEW BEGINNING!

THE CALM AND GENTLE NIGHT GIVES WAY TO AMBER DAWN.
ELSEWHERE THE UNSLEEPING PRESERVERS TEND TO THEIR CUSTOMARY BUSINESS...

THEIR LONG NIGHT'S WORK IS ALREADY FORGOTTEN AS THE SEARCH FOR NEW "STILLQUIET THINGS" GOES ON...
HERE IN THE HEART OF THE FORBIDDEN GROVE, MALAK AND SELAH WILL SLEEP TOGETHER... FOR A VERY LONG TIME!
Fin





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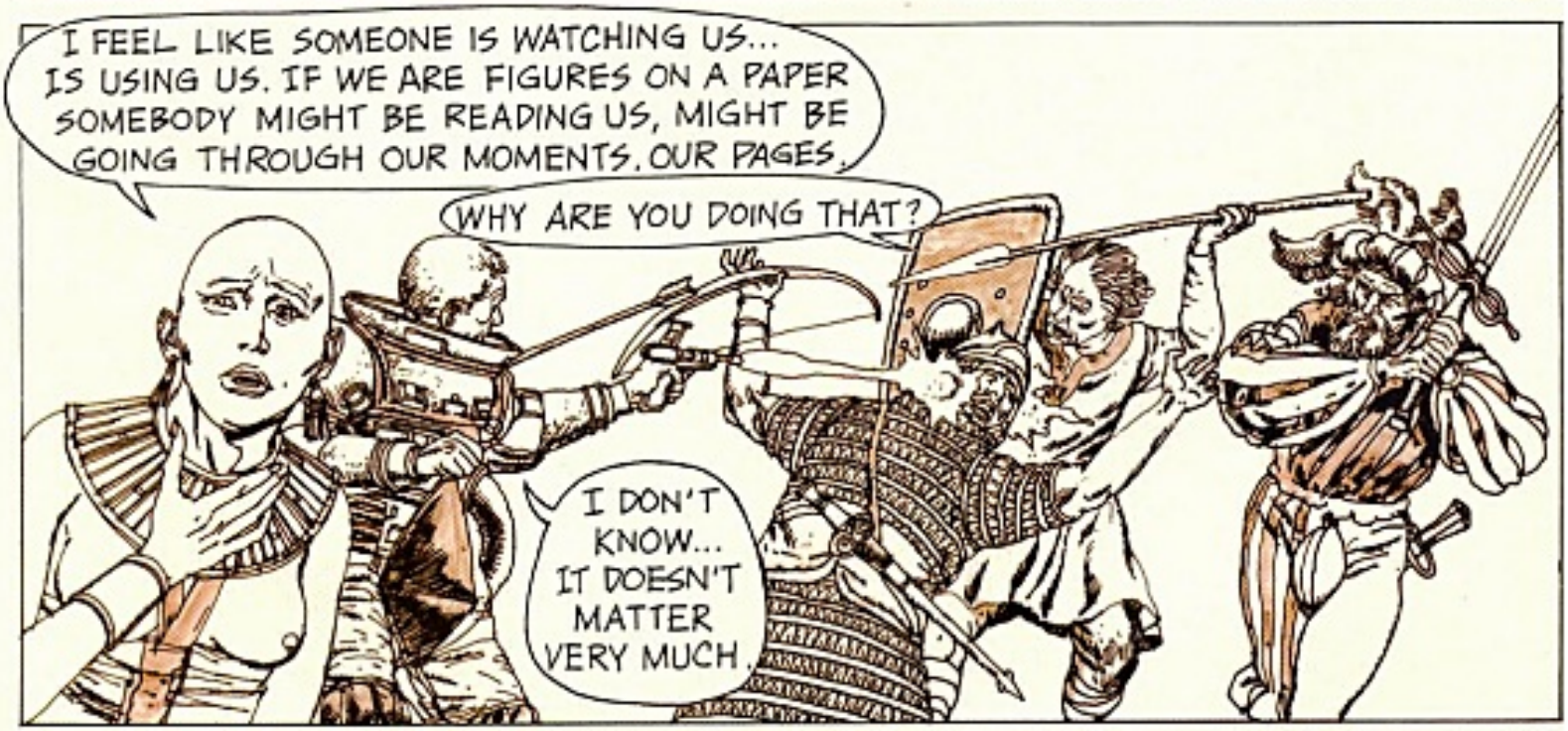
WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING HERE?
WE WON'T KNOW UNTIL OUR MOMENT IS GONE... CAN YOU SEE THESE LINES?
THIS IS OUR INSTANT. AND IT'S PASSING. WE GO FROM ONE SITUATION TO THE OTHER WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO US. WE'RE DRIVEN BY SOMEONE.
12N
HOW COME YOU KNOW SO MUCH?
I DON'T KNOW... I THINK I HAD ANOTHER SIMILAR EXISTENCE... THAT I LIVED ANOTHER STORY LIKE THIS ONE...
WE'RE LESS THAN PUPPETS. WE'RE NOT REAL. WE CAN'T EVEN MOVE AS WE WOULD LIKE TO.
MAYBE WE ARE ONLY FIGURES ON A SURFACE. MAYBE SOMEONE IS LOOKING AT US RIGHT NOW.

BUT WE EXIST, RIGHT? WE MOVE.
WE DON'T DO WHAT WE WANT. THERE IS SOMEONE CREATING US MOMENT BY MOMENT.
WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?

WE DON'T KNOW. DO YOU COME FROM SOMEWHERE?
NO...


I FEEL LIKE SOMEONE IS WATCHING US... IS USING US. IF WE ARE FIGURES ON A PAPER SOMEBODY MIGHT BE READING US, MIGHT BE GOING THROUGH OUR MOMENTS, OUR PAGES.
WHY ARE YOU DOING THAT?
I DON'T KNOW... IT DOESN'T MATTER VERY MUCH.

YOU'RE FIGHTING! YOU'RE KILLING EACH OTHER! TRY NOT TO MOVE!
I CAN'T! I CAN'T! TRY TO HELP ME!

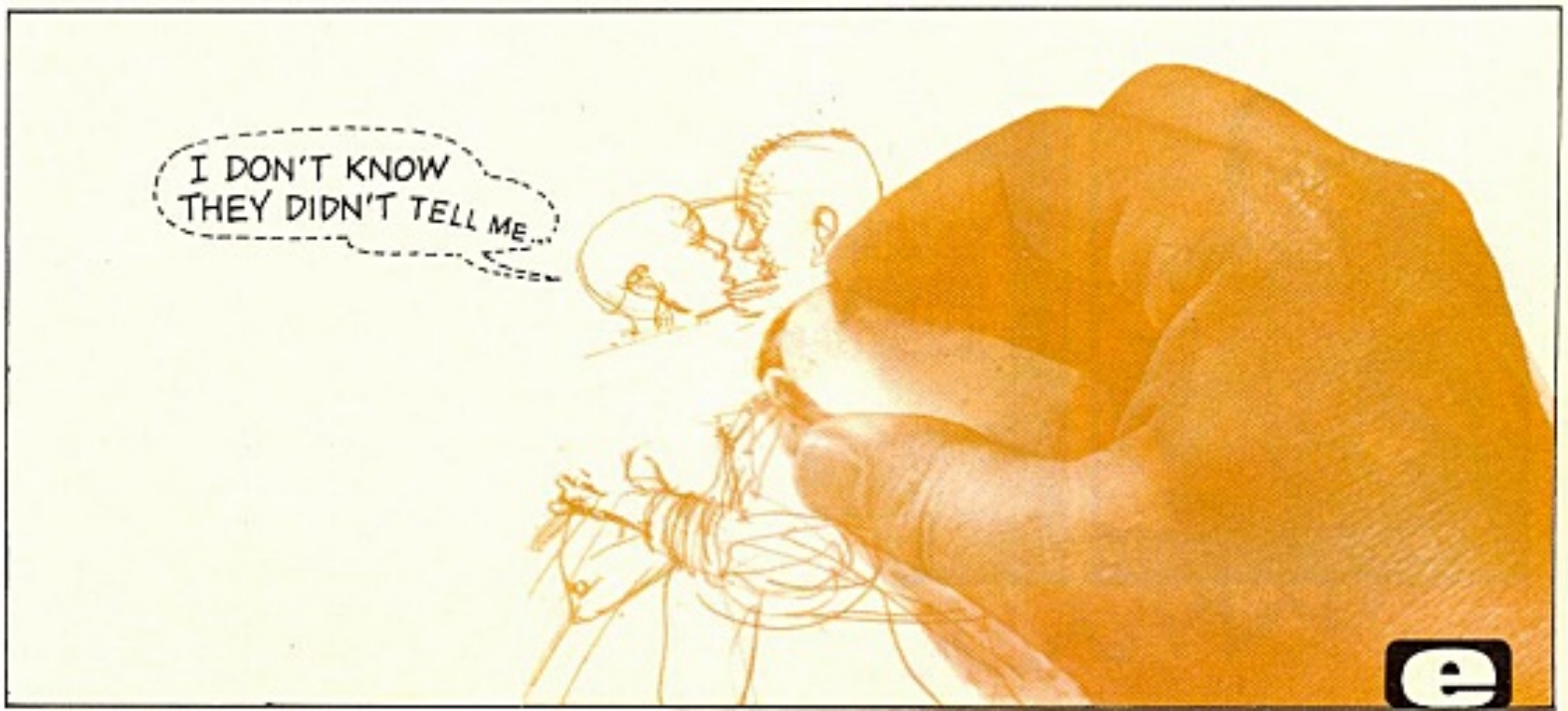
WHAT'S THE MATTER NOW?
I DON'T KNOW... HOLD ON...

I DON'T FEEL MYSELF MOVING ANYMORE.
YES... EVERYTHING IS ENDING.

WE DID SOMETHING... FOR SOMEONE. WE'RE GOING TO STAY ALIVE AS LONG AS HE KEEPS ON WATCHING US.

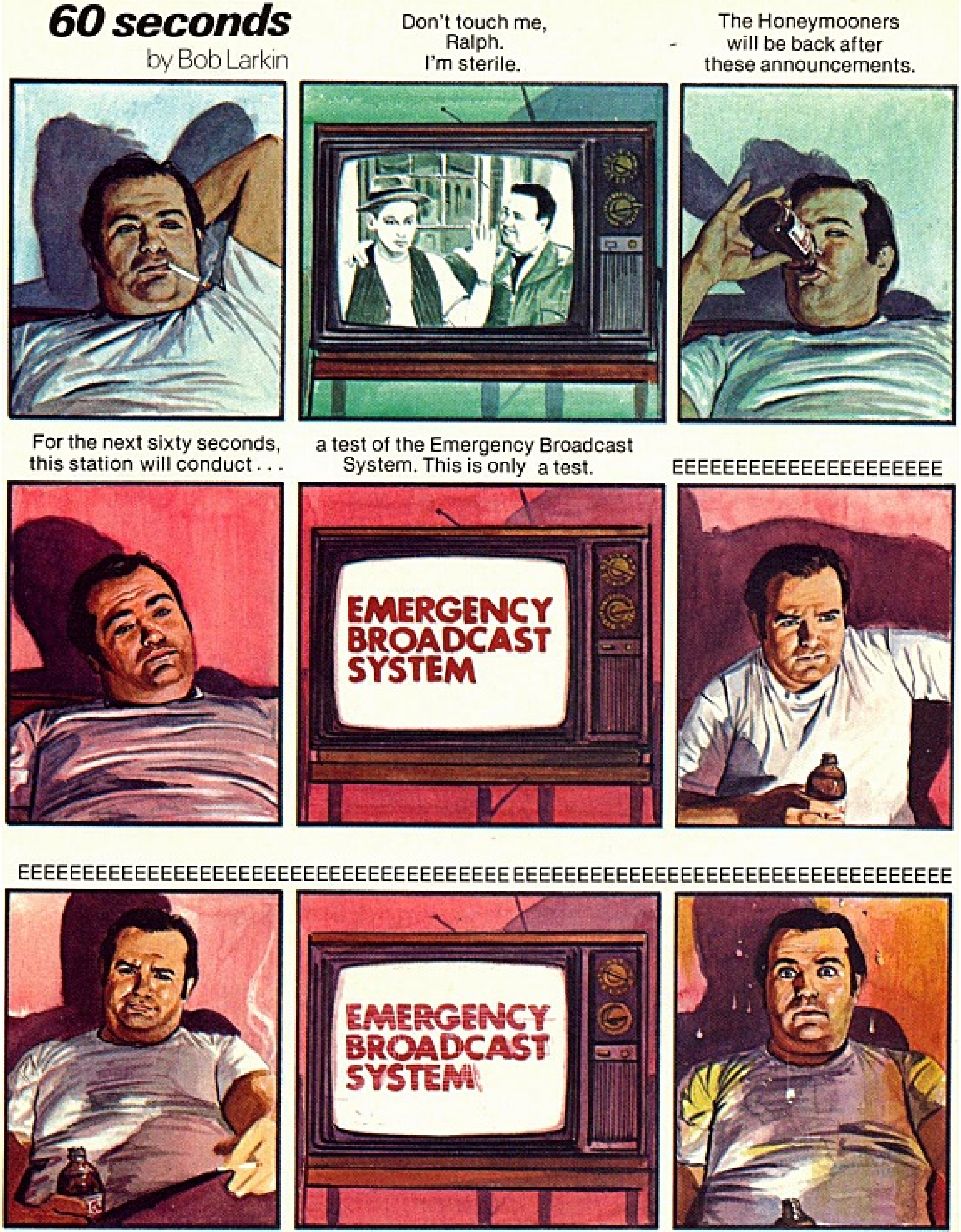
I FEEL LIKE THIS IS THE END.
CAN YOU SEE SOMETHING?

NO, I DON'T SEE ANYTHING UP FRONT... DON'T BE AFRAID... MAYBE WE'LL BE BACK... WHAT'S YOUR NAME?


I DON'T KNOW THEY DIDN'T TELL ME...

For the next 60 seconds

by Bob Larkin



EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE EEEEEEEEEEEEE
THOOMM!
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
FABOOMM

This has been a test of the Emergency Broadcast System. Had it been an actual alert, you would have been instructed where to tune in your area for news and official information. This was only a test.
BOB LARKIN ©79

METAMORPHOSIS ODYSSEY

AKNATON

CHAPTER I

THE ANGER WITHIN DRIVES HIM FORWARD AND BLINDS HIM TO HIS SURROUNDINGS. HIS VISIONS ARE PHANTOMS. HE SEES ONLY OSSIROS.

©1980 J.P. Starlin

HE REMEMBERS ORSIROS AS A PLACE OF SCIENTIFIC MARVEL, ANCIENT GRANDEUR, NATURAL BEAUTY, AND MYSTICAL SPIRIT AND WONDER. PERHAPS HIS MEMORIES ARE SLIGHTLY TINTED, BUT THIS IS TO BE FORGIVEN, FOR ORSIROS WAS HIS HOME.

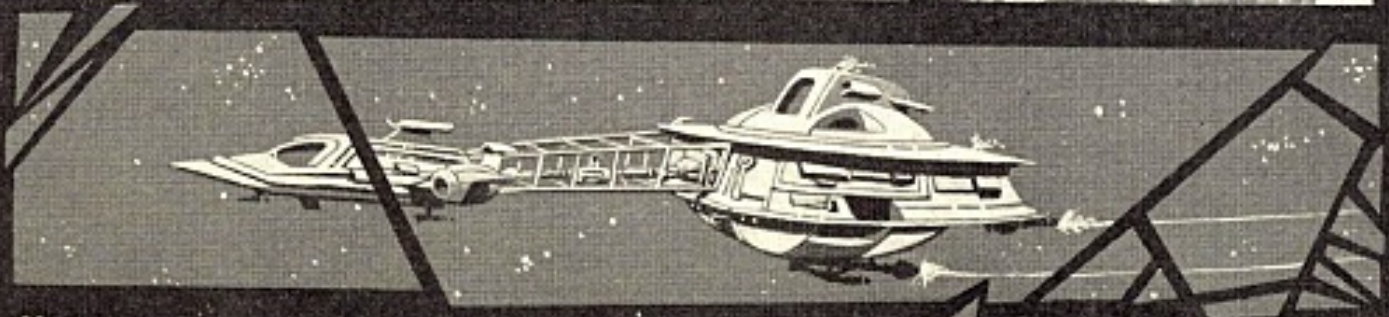
HIS HEART FILLS WITH THE SPECTRES OF FRIENDS NOW DEAD, AND OF THE THINGS THAT MADE THEM FRIENDS.

HIS EYES CLOUD AT THE REMEMBRANCE OF ONE WHO WAS SOFT, WARM, AND MORE THAN A FRIEND. HER NAME WAS NIETH.

THESE WISPS OF THE PAST, WHILE THEY LINGER, GENTLY SOOTHE HIS TROUBLED SOUL. THEY ARE FOREVER GONE, BUT IT HELPS THAT THEY ONCE WERE.

THEY AID HIM IN DEALING WITH THE RAZOR SHARPNESS OF HIS REALITY. THEY BLUNT THE SEARING PAIN OF HIS LOSS AND CONTROL THE HATRED WHICH TRAVELS WITH HIM.

THE BEAUTY FADES AND THE ANGER BECOMES GARGANTUAN. ORSIROS DISAPPEARS WITH A CRIMSON SHOCK AND ONLY THE HATED ZYGOTEANS REMAIN.



FROM WHERE THEY CAME REMAINS AN ENIGMA. SOME SAY THEY HAIL FROM THE SECOND SISTER OF THE PLEIADES. OTHERS CLAIM THEY ARE CREATIONS OF THE DARKER SIDE OF OUR OWN SOUL. WHILE MANY MORE ARE SURE THEY CAN ONLY BE DEMONS FROM HELL.

THE ANSWER LITTLE MATTERS, FOR IF THE FATES SMILE UPON YOU, TO MEET THE ZYGOTEANS IS TO GREET FIERY DEATH.

THOSE UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH TO SURVIVE CONQUEST LEARN A NEW DYING.

THE LIVING FIND THEMSELVES HERDED INTO SPECIAL CONDITIONING CENTERS BY THE ZYGOTEANS' BRUTISH THRALLS.

THERE, LIFE DISAPPEARS FROM THEIR EYES...

...BUT THEIR BODIES LIVE ON TO FORM AN UNQUESTIONING ARMY OF SLAVES.

THE HUMBLED PLANET ITSELF BECOMES THE ZYGOTEANS' NEXT VICTIM.

WITH INFINITE PATIENCE THE ZYGOTEANS STRIP AWAY EVERY TREASURE, BENEFIT OR BEAUTY OF THE VANQUISHED WORLD.

WITHIN TWO OR THREE GENERATIONS THEIR LABORS ARE COMPLETE AND THEY MOVE ON.

ON ORSIROS THIS GRIM TABLEAU WAS REPEATED ON VIEW SCREENS HUNDREDS OF TIMES.

THE PROUD AND POWERFUL ORSIROSIANS WATCHED IN HORROR AS ONE WORLD AFTER ANOTHER FELL BENEATH THE TERRIBLE ZYGOTEAN WAR MACHINE.

HUNDREDS OF TIMES THEY WATCHED AND HOPED BUT NEVER DID THEY ACT.

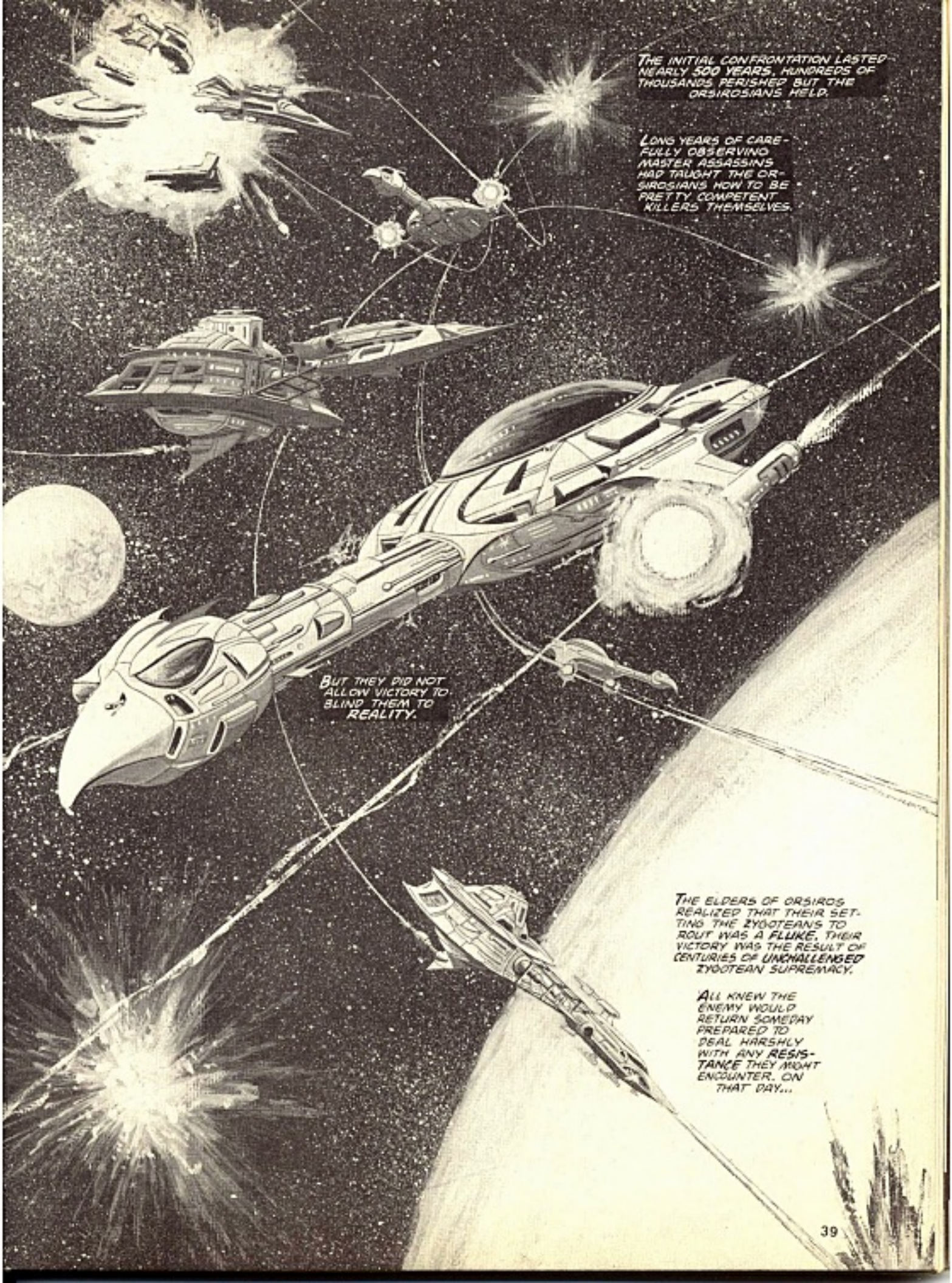
FOR WAR WAS A STATE THEY HAD SOMEHOW NEVER BEEN PLAGUED WITH, EVEN THOUGH POWER HAD ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF THEIR GODS.

THIS MAY HAVE BEEN BECAUSE DESPITE THE FACT THAT CENTURIES WERE BUT HOURS TO THEM, THE ORSIROSIANS STILL FEARED DEATH.

YET STILL THEY KNEW THAT SOMEDAY THE ZYGOTEANS WOULD COME TO CLAIM THE BOUNTY OF ORSIROS.

SO THEY WATCHED AND THEY LEARNED OF DEATH AND KILLING, AND PREPARED.

THE DAY CAME AND THEY WENT OUT IN SILVER DEATH BIRDS TO GREET THE ZYGOTEANS.


THE INITIAL CONFRONTATION LASTED NEARLY 500 YEARS. HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS PERISHED BUT THE ORSIROSIANS HELD.
LONG YEARS OF CAREFULLY OBSERVING MASTER ASSASSINS HAD TAUGHT THE ORSIROSIANS HOW TO BE PRETTY COMPETENT KILLERS THEMSELVES.
BUT THEY DID NOT ALLOW VICTORY TO BLIND THEM TO REALITY.
THE ELDERS OF ORSIROS REALIZED THAT THEIR SETTING THE ZYOOTEANS TO ROUT WAS A FLUKE. THEIR VICTORY WAS THE RESULT OF CENTURIES OF UNCHALLENGED ZYOOTEAN SUPREMACY.
ALL KNEW THE ENEMY WOULD RETURN SOMEDAY PREPARED TO DEAL HARSHLY WITH ANY RESISTANCE THEY MIGHT ENCOUNTER. ON THAT DAY...

...ORSIROS WOULD FALL.

A HUNDRED NEW STRATEGIES WERE CONCEIVED AND FOUND TO BE LACKING. A THOUSAND NEW POWER SOURCES WERE TESTED AND FAILED TO BE ENOUGH.

AT LAST DEATH BECAME AN ACCEPTED PART OF THEIR FUTURE AND A MAJOR FACTOR IN THEIR PLANS.

THE ORSIROSIAN PREPARED TO DIE BUT REFUSED TO DIE ALONE.

EVERY IOTA OF MYSTICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL POWER ON THEIR WORLD WAS CALLED TO TASK.

...INFINITY HORN! THOUGH NOTHING COULD SAVE ORSIROS, ITS PEOPLE KNEW THE HORN WOULD PROVE THE UNDOING OF THE ZYGOTEANS AND FINAL HOPE FOR THE UNIVERSE.

STILL ONCE USED, THE HORN WOULD PROVE UNCONTROLLABLE IN ITS WRATH, SO FAIL-SAFING WAS INSTITUTED. AKNATON WAS APPOINTED ITS GUARDIAN, A POSITION WHICH REQUIRED VAST POWERS. HIS FELLOW ELDERS PROVIDED THIS MIGHT FROM THEIR OWN INNER SOURCES.

WITH THIS POWER HE LOOKED INTO THE FUTURE: SAW THE TRIUMPH OF THE ZYGOTEANS, THE DESTRUCTION OF ORSIROS, THE RELEASE OF THE HORN'S VENGEANCE AND HIS OWN DEATH.

ARMED WITH THIS KNOWLEDGE, HE RAN THE ZYGOTEAN BLOCKADE.

MASSIVE FORCES WERE FORGED INTO MATTER, NEW CONCEPTS WERE EMBRACED, OLD BELIEFS WERE TWISTED AND NEW AND FORGOTTEN GODS WERE CALLED UPON TO AID IN THE CREATION OF THE...

HE CONCEALED THE INFINITY HORN ON A BARREN WORLD THE ENEMY WOULD PROBABLY NEVER BOTHER. FROM THERE...

...HE TRAVELED TO THE THIRD PLANET OF THE STARSYSTEM SOL. ON THAT PRIMITIVE WORLD HE INSTILLED A CERTAIN RACIAL MEMORY INTO THE DIM MINDS OF THE EMERGING HOMO SAPIENS THERE.

NEXT HE VISITED A STRANGELY LUSH BUT UNINHABITED WORLD IN THE CRAB NEBULA GALAXY AND RELEASED LIFE OF HIS OWN CREATION.

ON A HARSH WORLD OF THE ALPHA CENTAURI SYSTEM POPULATED BY CANNIBALISTIC BRUTES HE INTRODUCED THE POTENTIAL TO CARE.

LASTLY, ON AN OUTER PLANET OF VEGA HE LEFT A SWORD OF ICY FIRE, KNOWING THAT SOMEDAY ONE WOULD COME TO CLAIM IT.

THE END NEARLY TOOK 100,000 YEARS TO OCCUR.

ITS COMING MEANT MANY FINAL FARE-WELLS FOR AKNATON...

...SOME MORE HEART-RENDING THAN OTHERS.

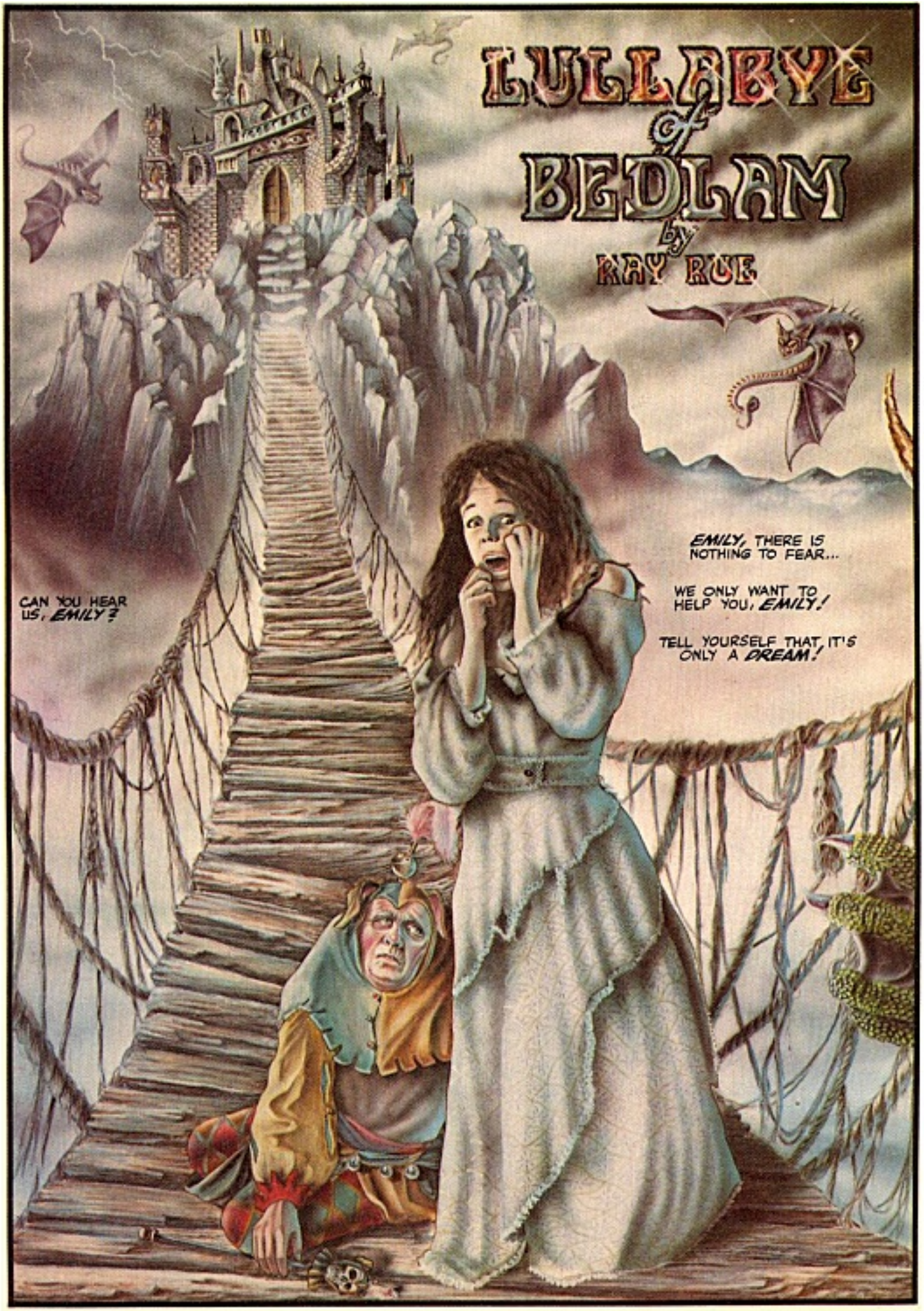
BUT AT LAST HE STEPPED UPON HIS MELODISC AND TOOK LEAVE OF HIS DOOMED HOME.

HE TRIED TO KEEP HIS BACK TO HIS DYING WORLD FOR HE KNEW WHAT WAS COMING.

YET AT THE LAST MOMENT HE TURNED AND WITNESSED THE MONSTROUS FORCES OF ZYGOTE TEAR HIS PLANET APART.

THE IMAGE ONCE AGAIN BURNT ITSELF DEEP IN-TO HIS SOUL...

...AND HE DISAPPEARED INTO THE NIGHT WITH TEARFUL WHISPERS OF VENGEANCE ON HIS LIPS.


LULLABYE of BEDLAM
by RAY RUE
CAN YOU HEAR US, EMILY?
EMILY, THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR...
WE ONLY WANT TO HELP YOU, EMILY!
TELL YOURSELF THAT IT'S ONLY A DREAM!

©1990 Ray Rue

IT'S NO USE-- SHE CAN'T HEAR US! I'M AFRAID HER CONDITION IS CRITICAL!
IT STILL AMAZES ME, DR. ADLER--TO THINK WE'RE ACTUALLY SEEING HER DREAMS!
MERELY VIDEO INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BRAIN'S ELECTRICAL IMPULSES... A BLEND OF NUCLEAR PHYSICS AND PSYCHOLOGY.

AND NOW WE'RE READY FOR THE NEXT STEP: DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE UNCONSCIOUS.
BEFORE WE ESTABLISH THE LINK, STUDY THESE CAREFULLY!
HER DREAM IMAGES...
YES, THE ARCHETYPES! REMEMBER, DAVID...

...THESE ARE LIVING PSYCHIC FORCES, AS REAL AS YOU AND I!
THIS IS THANATOS, HER NEGATIVE SELF!
THE SICKNESS THAT IS DRIVING HER TO MADNESS AND DEATH!

AVRAM, WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS ONE?
THE "WISE FOOL"-- SHE CALLS HIM CROAKER. HE APPEARS TO REPRESENT HER WILL TO LIVE-- WEAK THOUGH IT MAY BE.
WITHOUT HIM, SHE WOULD SURELY DIE!

LATER...
IF EMILY IS TO BE CURED, YOU MUST COAX HER TO DREAM THE MYTH ONWARD!
I ONLY HOPE I CAN REACH HER IN TIME!

ONCE YOU'VE GONE UNDER, WE'LL MAKE THE HOOK-UP... YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS WILL THEN BE DRAWN INTO HERS! GOOD LUCK, DAVID!

NURSE, GIVE DR. WALKER THE INJECTION. TEN... NINE... EIGHT... SEVEN...
...SIX... FIVE... FOUR...
...THREE... TWO... ONE!
GET UP, SIR, GET UP! NO TIME TO SLEEP!
WHAT... I... GOOD LORD! IT WORKED!
AWAY, SIR, COME AWAY! NASTIES WILL BE SWOOPIN' SOON!
LISTEN, THERE'S NOTHING TO FEAR-- I'M HERE TO HELP!
YES, WE KNOWS! NOW FLEE! THEY SWOOPS!
NO, FACE THEM! THEY ONLY LIVE IN YOUR OWN MIND! THEY'RE ILLUSIONS, CROAKER! THEY--
REMEMBER... LIVING PSYCHIC FORCES! REAL AS YOU AND I... REMEMBER!

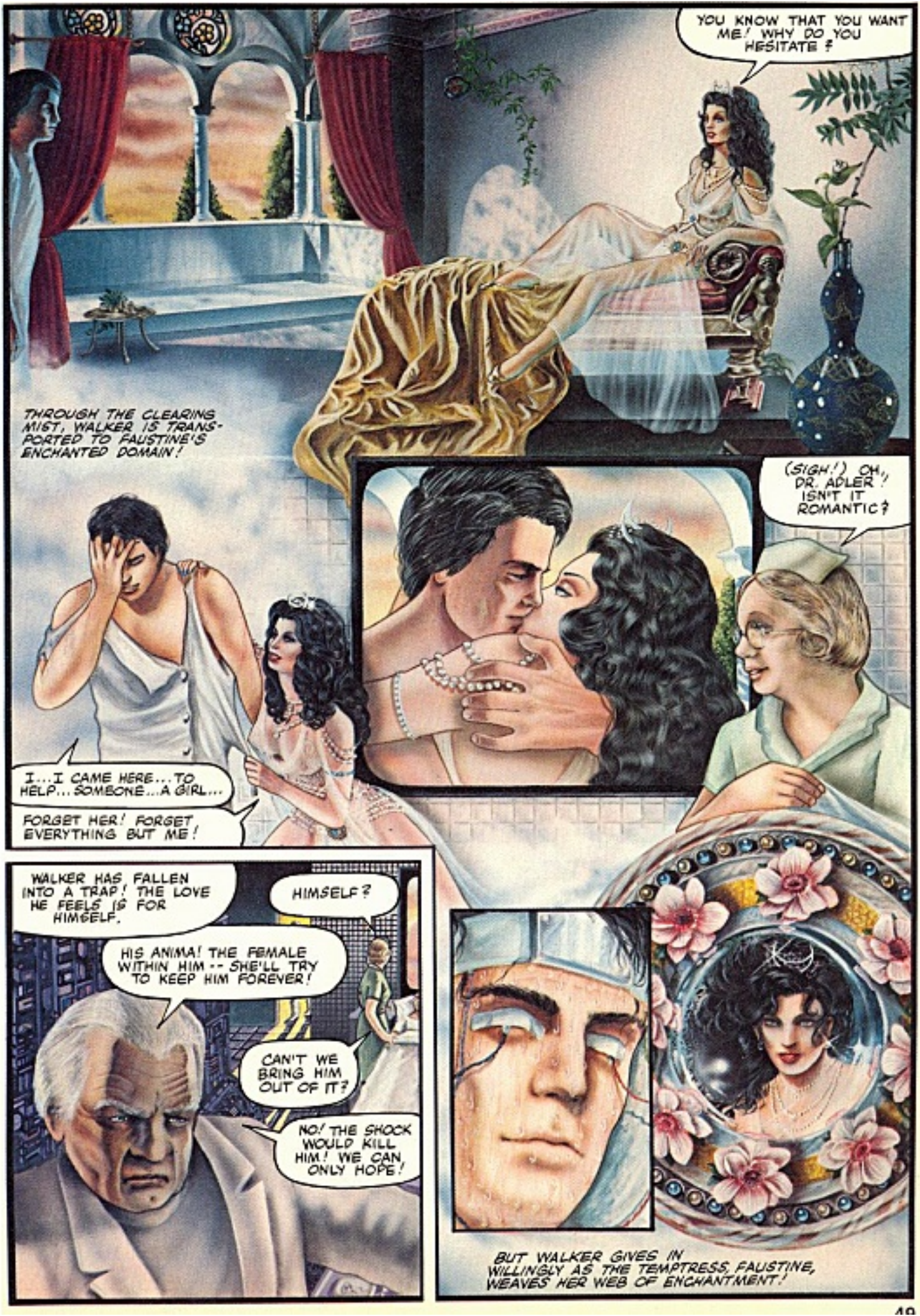
QUICKLY, SIR! THIS WAY! OVER THE BRIDGE!
RUN!
THE BRIDGE CREAKS AND SWAYS...
AS THE ANCIENT ROPES STRAIN... AND BREAK!
AFTER A LONG AND ARDUOUS CLIMB, WALTER AND CROAKER FINALLY REACH THE SUMMIT, WHERE THEY ARE MET...
FOLLOW ME, GENTLEMEN! FAUSTINE IS WAITING!
...BY A VERY STRANGE EMISSARY!

METHINKS THE BIRD WANTS US TO FOLLOW, SIR!

WHILE, AT THE LAB...
I DON'T LIKE THIS! THE IMAGES HE'S SEEING WEREN'T IN EMILY'S DREAM!

THE GATES OPEN WIDE...
CROAKER, LOOK! WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
HELL'S BELLS! IT MUST BE A FOOL'S PARADISE!

DAVID! YOU'VE COME AT LAST!
COME TO ME! COME TO FAUSTINE! I HAVE WAITED SO VERY LONG!
GAZING UPWARD, WALKER IS UNAWARE OF THE MIST RISING ABOUT HIM... HE SEES ONLY HER EYES, DRAWING HIM CLOSER...


YOU KNOW THAT YOU WANT ME! WHY DO YOU HESITATE?
THROUGH THE CLEARING MIST, WALKER IS TRANSPORTED TO FAUSTINE'S ENCHANTED DOMAIN!
(SIGH!) OH, DR. ADLER! ISN'T IT ROMANTIC?
I...I CAME HERE...TO HELP...SOMEONE...A GIRL...
FORGET HER! FORGET EVERYTHING BUT ME!
WALKER HAS FALLEN INTO A TRAP! THE LOVE HE FEELS IS FOR HIMSELF.
HIMSELF?
HIS ANIMA! THE FEMALE WITHIN HIM -- SHE'LL TRY TO KEEP HIM FOREVER!
CAN'T WE BRING HIM OUT OF IT?
NO! THE SHOCK WOULD KILL HIM! WE CAN ONLY HOPE!
BUT WALKER GIVES IN WILLINGLY AS THE TEMPTRESS, FAUSTINE, WEAVES HER WEB OF ENCHANTMENT!

DAYS TURN INTO WEEKS AS DAVID SINKS INTO THE SPLENDOR OF FAUSTINE'S SPELL...
SOMEHOW, FAUSTINE, IT FEELS LIKE I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN YOU!
YOU HAVE, DARLING! I'M EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER DREAMED OF!
SOMETHING IN HER REPLY SPARKS A DISTANT MEMORY...
AND SUDDENLY EVERYTHING BECOMES VERY CLEAR!
I SEE IT ALL NOW! WHAT A FOOL I'VE BEEN! THIS ISN'T EMILY'S DREAM--IT'S MINE!
DAVID, WAIT!!
I'LL NEVER LET YOU GO--NEVER!
FAUSTINE SURROUNDS HIM WITH A WALL OF FIRE!
DR. ADLER IS QUICK TO REACT: GRABBING A GLASS OF WATER, HE DASHES IT IN WALKER'S FACE!
WITHOUT WARNING, HUGE WAVES CRASH IN TO QUENCH THE FLAMES!
ADLER: "IT WORKED! THE EXTERNAL STIMULUS IS AFFECTING HIS DREAM!"

THE WAVES CARRY WALKER FAR AWAY FROM THE LAND OF HIS DREAMS, INTO THE DEPTHS OF A MAD WOMAN'S NIGHTMARE!

ENTERING THE DEMON'S LAIR, DR. WALKER SPIES A FAMILIAR FORM, CROUCHED IN A CORNER...
OH MY GOD...
W-WALKER! YOU'VE COME BACK! YOU'VE FINALLY COME BACK!
WHAT IS THIS?! WHO DARES TO DEFY THE WILL OF THANATOS?!!
EMILY!
FOOLISH MORTAL! THERE IS MORE TO MY POWER THAN YOUR PUNY MIND CAN EVER COMPREHEND!
THERE CAN BE NO ESCAPE FROM THANATOS REX!

"BEHOLD THAT WHICH IS GREATER THAN YOURSELF! BEHOLD EVIL IN ALL OF ITS MANY FORMS!" DAVID AND EMILY FLEE IN TERROR AS THANATOS ASSUMES AN EVEN MORE HIDEOUS SHAPE!
EMILY, LISTEN! THIS IS NOTHING BUT A DREAM -- AND YOU CAN END IT IF YOU TRY!
YOU CAN WAKE UP AND LIVE, OR DIE IN THIS HELL! THE CHOICE IS YOURS!
I... I WANT TO LIVE... I WANT TO LIVE!
EMILY'S SUDDEN SHOW OF STRENGTH REACHES THE DYING CROAKER, TRANSFORMING HIM...

...INTO AN ANGEL WIELDING THE SWORD OF TRUTH.
IT IS DONE. COME, EMILY. LET US SHAKE OFF THIS SLEEP OF DREAMS.
AND SO, HER DEMONS LAID TO REST, EMILY WALKER AWAKENS.
IT'S OVER, DR. ADLER -- I'M READY TO COME HOME!
DR. ADLER? DR. ADLER?!
YOU'RE GOING TO BE FINE NOW, MISS WALKER -- THANKS TO YOUR BROTHER DAVID...
DR. ADLER, COME QUICKLY. DR. WALKER HAS HAD A HEART ATTACK!
HE'S DEAD!
SOMEWHERE WITHIN A DREAM, A LOST SOUL SCREAMS, AGAIN AND AGAIN.
THE END

THE FANTASIES OF MIRKO ILIĆ

He's a talented young Yugoslavian cartoonist. Over these next three pages and in future issues, you can experience his unique, darkly humored, one page fantasies. Graphic. Surreal. Disturbing. For unlike many fantasies, his are about reality.

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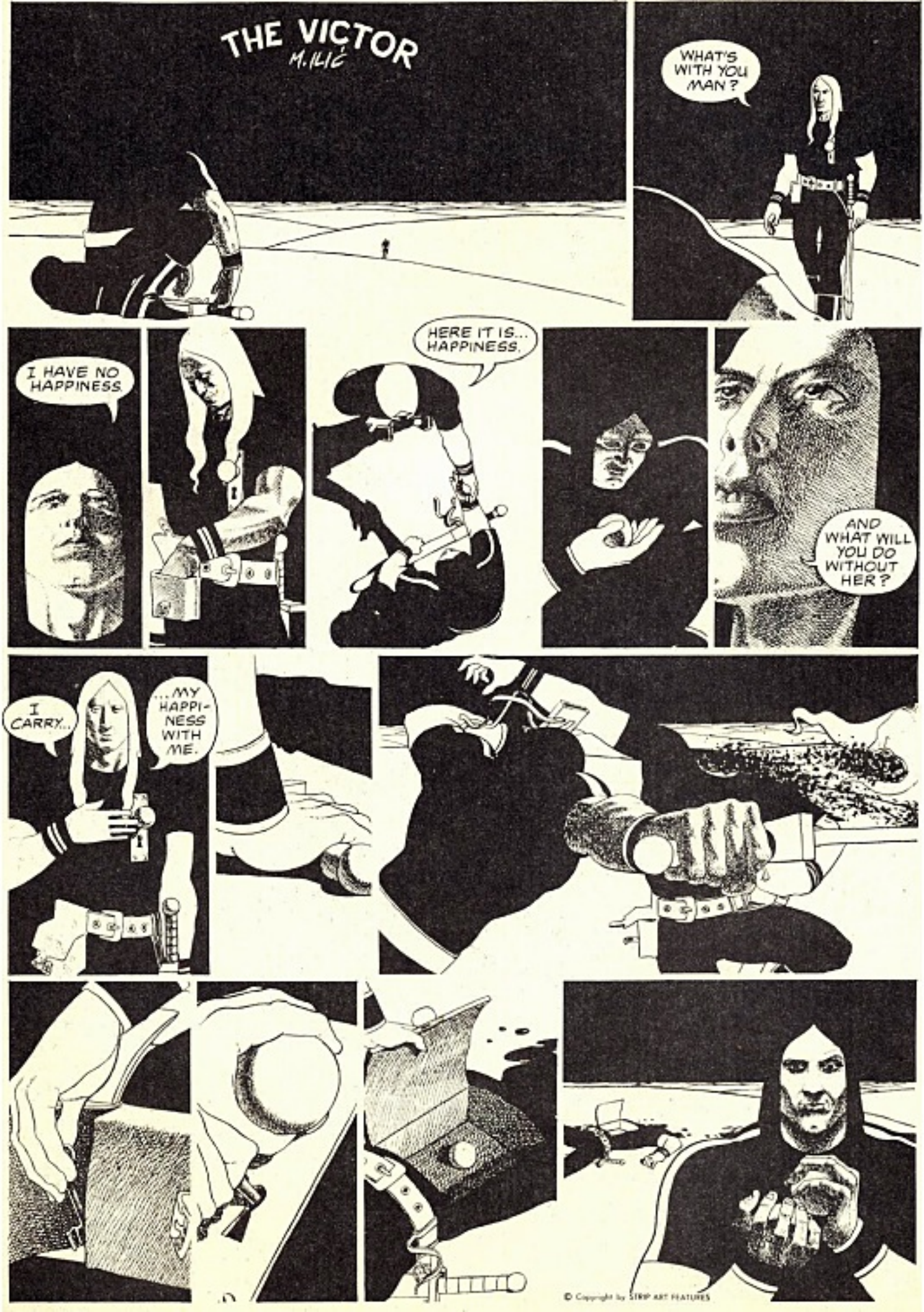
THE VICTOR
M. ILIĆ
WHAT'S WITH YOU MAN?
I HAVE NO HAPPINESS.
HERE IT IS... HAPPINESS.
AND WHAT WILL YOU DO WITHOUT HER?
I CARRY...
...MY HAPPINESS WITH ME.
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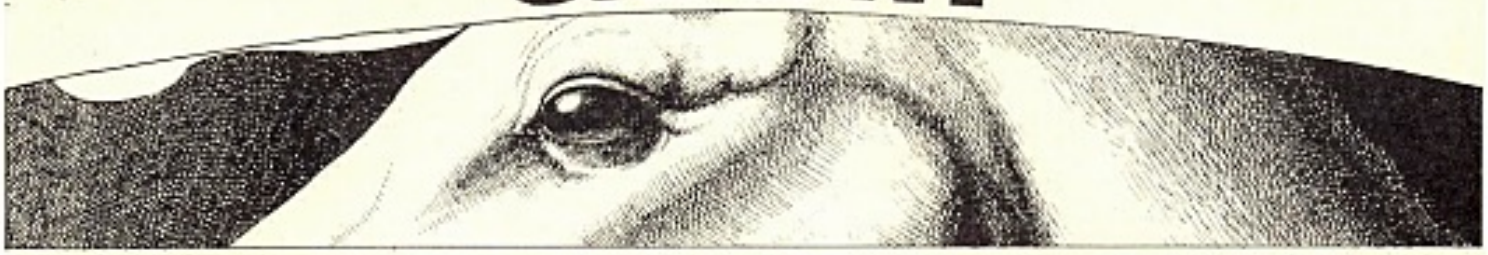
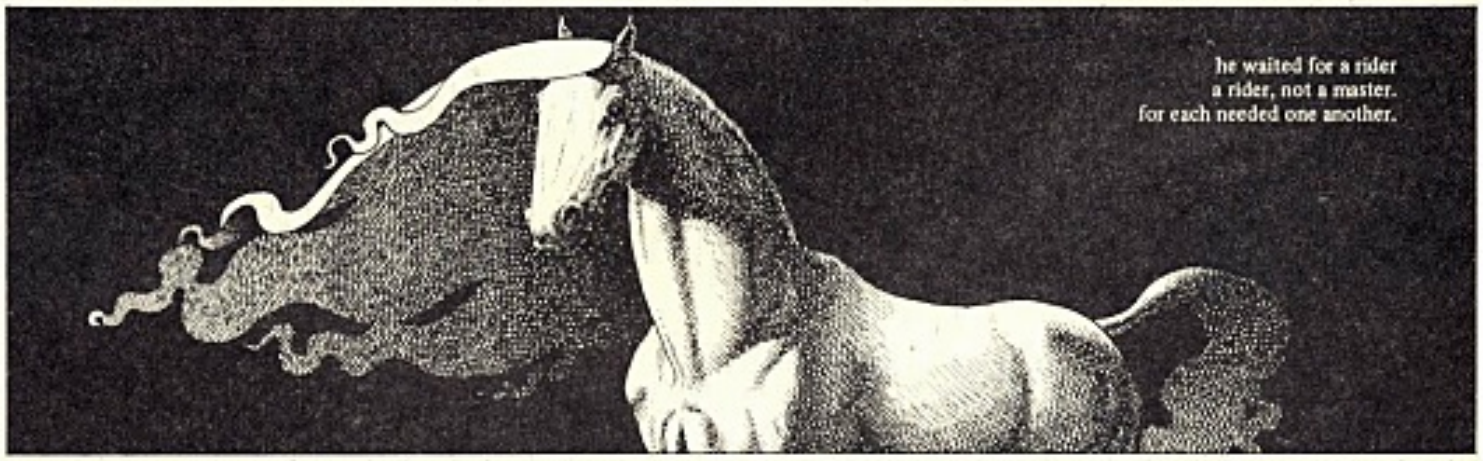
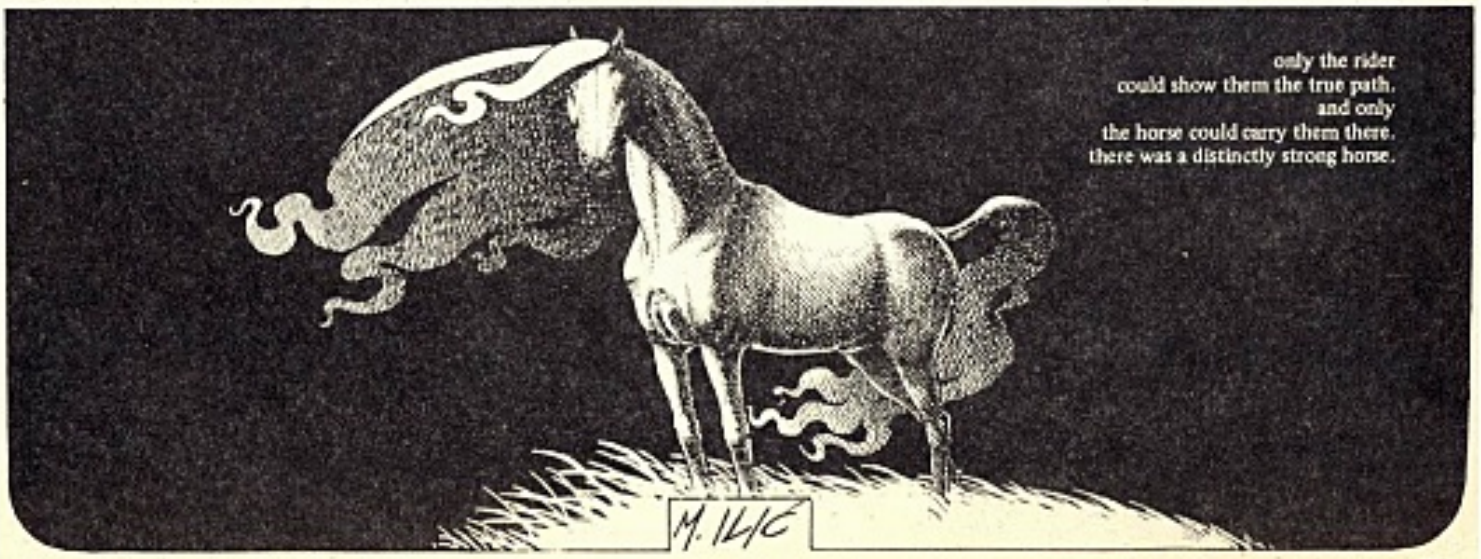
SHAKTI



there was a distinctly beautiful
and strong horse.

who
endlessly stood in one place.


he waited for a rider
a rider, not a master.
for each needed one another.


only the rider
could show them the true path.
and only
the horse could carry them there.
there was a distinctly strong horse.
M. 1/1/6

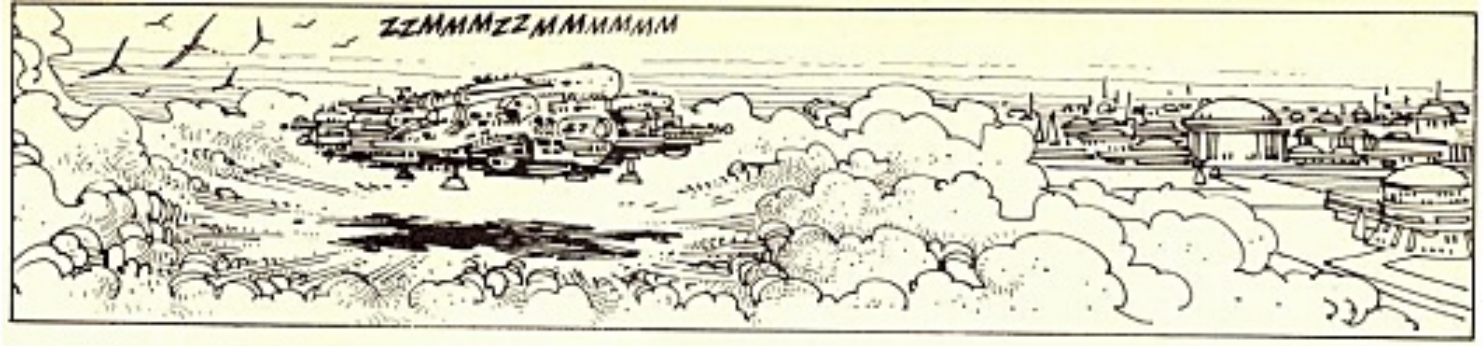
CONVERT

...TWIN SUNS. COMFORT INDEX: 18 CELSIUS. AIRQUAL: GOOD TO EX. POP-REL TO BODTEMPAV: 98.05112°, 28.786 AND HOLDING. NATIVES: HEATHEN, HOSTILE, CAREFREE, SELF-RELIANT. GODS: EARTH--TUTIU, WIND--TAWAIN, FIRE--AHOOEEI.
PERFECT.
ERNIE COLÓN

LOOK, BLIND ONE.
A HUGE BIRD.

IT IS NOT A BIRD, MY SON...

... BUT A SHIP OF BASE METAL, AND THE MAN INSIDE... OF BASER METTLE STILL.

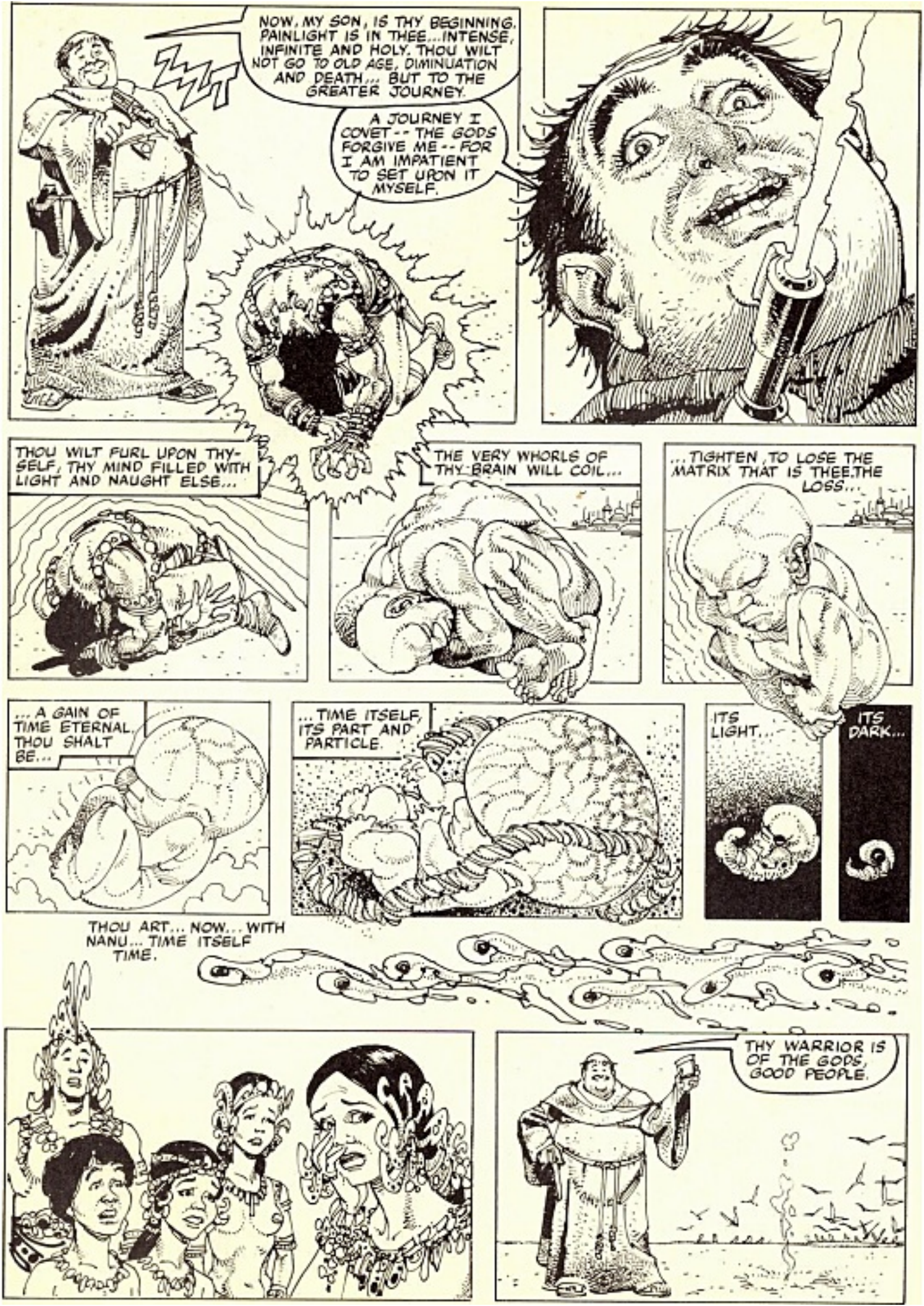

ZZMMMZZMMMMMM

MY CHILDREN, HEAR ME. I AM FRIAR ALZX. (RUFF TRANSLIT.): MAN-WITH-DIRECT-PIPELINE-TO-SHAMSHA-ISHTAR-AND-ADAD, GODS-OF-SUN-AND-LIGHT. I COME TO SHOW YOU THE WAY TO EVERLASTING LIGHT, TO CONVERT YOU FROM HEATHEN DARKNESS AND AWAY FROM FALSE GODS, MY CHILDREN.
WE ARE NOT CHILDREN. WE ARE THE PEOPLE, AND OUR GODS ARE THE TRUE GODS.
AYE. TUTIU, TAWAIN AND AHOOGEI.

TARRY AWHILE, MY SON, AND I WILL GIVE THEE TO THE TRUE GODS.

FOUL-FATNESS-WITHOUT-BATH! I SHALL USE YOUR ENTRAILS TO FORETELL MY FUTURE.

WHAT FUTURE, MY SON? I SEE NO FUTURE FOR THEE... BUT A PAST BEYOND THE PAST, BEYOND TIME.
ZZIT
EEEAH!


NOW, MY SON, IS THY BEGINNING. PAINLIGHT IS IN THEE...INTENSE, INFINITE AND HOLY. THOU WILT NOT GO TO OLD AGE, DIMINUATION AND DEATH... BUT TO THE GREATER JOURNEY.
A JOURNEY I COVET -- THE GODS FORGIVE ME -- FOR I AM IMPATIENT TO SET UPON IT MYSELF.
THOU WILT FURL UPON THY-SELF, THY MIND FILLED WITH LIGHT AND NAUGHT ELSE...
THE VERY WHORLS OF THY BRAIN WILL COIL...
...TIGHTEN, TO LOSE THE MATRIX THAT IS THEE. THE LOSS...
...A GAIN OF TIME ETERNAL THOU SHALT BE...
...TIME ITSELF, ITS PART AND PARTICLE.
ITS LIGHT...
ITS DARK...
THOU ART... NOW... WITH NANU... TIME ITSELF TIME.
THY WARRIOR IS OF THE GODS, GOOD PEOPLE.

AND THOU? THOU ART THEIR SHAMAN?
THEIR PRIEST, SIRE...
...AND YOUR SERVANT.

I SHALL PLACE THIS IN THINE EAR. SHORTLY, THOU SHALT KNOW ALL I KNOW... OUR GOOD BOOK, OUR HISTORY, ALL PHASES OF OUR TECHNOLOGY DOWN TO THE VERY MINICOMPS ON MY SHIP.
WITH SUCH UNDERSTANDING THINE... I SHALT EASILY CONVERT THEE TO THE TRUE GODS.

INTHEBEGINNINGTHEREWASLIGHTANDNODARKTOGIVEFORMTOPAYLI
LOADRECPULLBV2c*C#.006VECPULLGYROVECTORINTERRAINCOMPI
CUPCAKEFOODLOKSECSZd-3GUIDELINEACTHOUWILTNOTCOVETTH
TRUEFAITHISHTARSECTOR9*TO7*HNACELLELEYZF-TACYBASE 7E
101-FAF2193FROMYSECYOURTRANSMESSCOMPBOARDTHOUWILT
CONVERTALLNONBELIEVERSTOTRUEFAITHTRANS5B98cLIQUIDHYDR
FUELCONVERTBINTOHYDROPONTERACSEC277FDYIELDQUOTAVAILU
ABTHXLL38TANKSONAUTONAVTONNAGEMINATECOTAC45*TRANSI
MITTEDATTHESPEEDOFCOVETNOOTHERGODSBEFORENTOPOWERAND
WEHOLDTHESETRUTHS TO BE749-49X2LX2 53IANDKEEPITHOL88666

GOT IT?
G-GOT IT.

AND NOW...
YOU-CAN-NOT-MOVE.
I-CAN-NOT-MOVE.

GET HIM.
GOT HIM.

TAKE HIM TO THE SACRED CHAMBER. LET US SEE HOW YOU FARE AT CONVERTING *HIM*.

AND THIS TIME GO EASY ON THE MARJORAM.

TIME... PASSES...

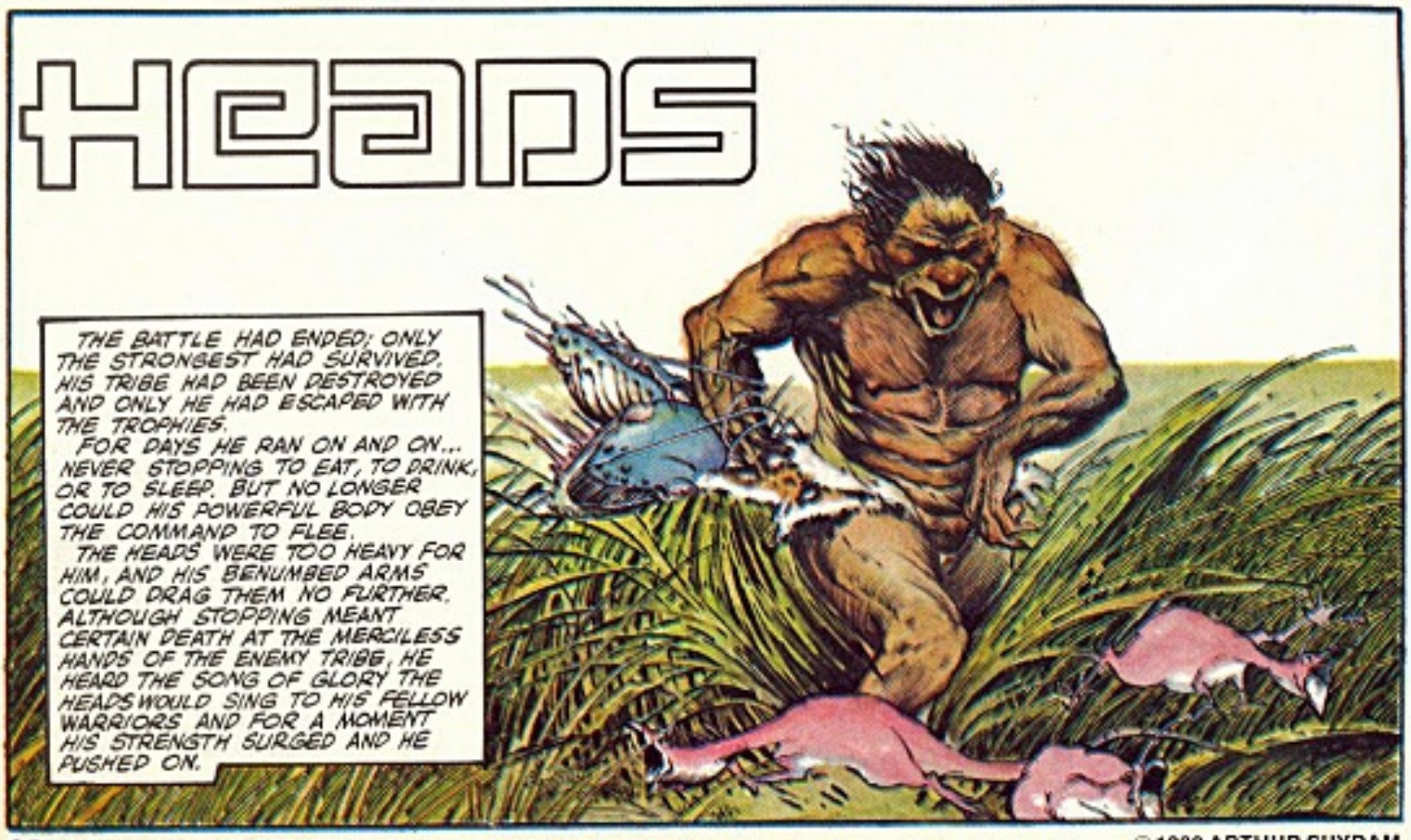
MILORD.

AH. I THANK YOU, WARRIOR.

PE-101F-NINER CALLING Y-BASE AF2193... COME IN, PLEASE.

THIS IS Y-BASE, PE-101F-NINER. THOU ART ON V-SEC 9M 2C 3. WHAT IS THY MESSTRANS?

MESSTRANS FOLLOWS: *SEND MORE FRYERS!*



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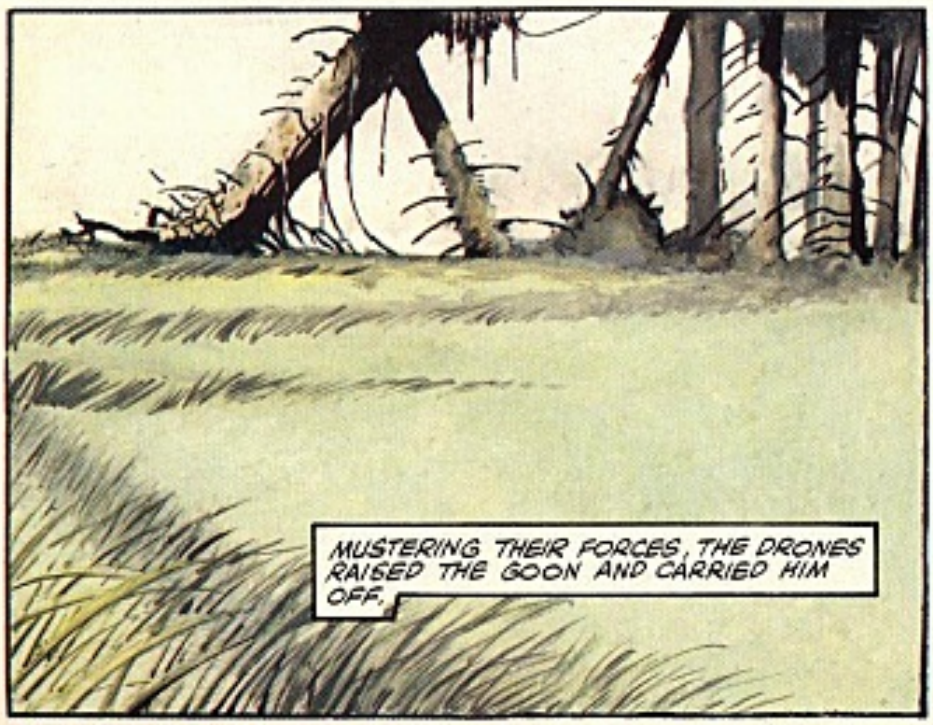
BUT HIS WEAKNESS OVERPOWERED HIM AND, RELUCTANTLY, HE HID THE HEADS IN A CLUMP OF GRASS, VOWING TO RETURN FOR THEM.
VULNERABLE TO HIS PURSUERS ON THE OPEN PLAIN, HE SOUGHT THE SANCTUARY OF THE DISTANT FOREST. NOW HE WAS CLOSE.
SUDDENLY, HIS WEARINESS BECAME A BLACK CLOUD, SURROUNDING HIM. HE STOPPED, SWAYING LIKE A TREE IN THE WIND. THEN...
HIS HARD BODY SANK INTO THE SOFT MOSS THAT CARPETED THE FOREST FLOOR, CRUSHING THE MUSHROOMS AND TOADSTOOLS INTO A PULPY PILLOW.
AN EERIE SILENCE FOLLOWED. NO WARM BREEZE BLEW THE GRASSES. NO CREATURE STIRRED.
UNTIL...

FROM UNDER COLORFUL DOMES, TINY ARMS AND LEGS MOVED. TINY EYES PEERED WONDERSTRUCK AT THE GIANT FALLEN FROM THE SKY.
UNDER THE GOON, HUNDREDS OF OTHER TINY ARMS AND LEGS OF THOSE LESS FORTUNATE PROTRUDED, CENTIPEDE-LIKE. THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH THE PUNGENT AROMA OF THE OOZINGS FROM THEIR CRUSHED LITTLE BODIES.



AT LAST, THEY REACHED THE OLD WILLOW-TREE AT THE FOREST'S EDGE. ON THE TREE'S FAR SIDE, HIDDEN FROM DAY-LIGHT'S PENETRATING RAYS, YAWNED AN OPENING LACED WITH CREEPERS, LEADING TO AN UNDERGROUND PASSAGE.

NEARBY...

DO DA DOO OH ROCKY RACOON... YEAH...

HUH? WHAT'S DIS?

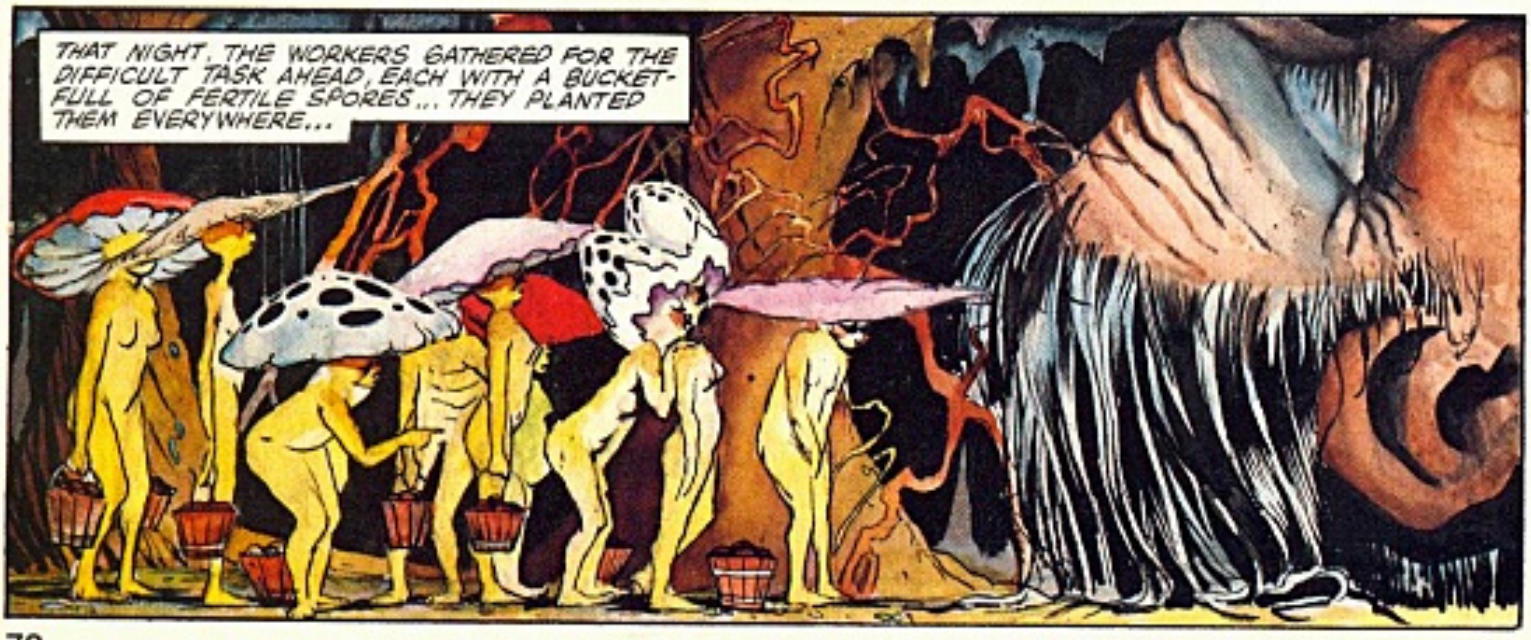
LOOKY HERE! DA TRACKS END IN DIS PATCH O' SQUISHED MUSHROOMS... WHAT WE GONNA DO NOW?

DAT DOOKY-BUTT GOON IS AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE... I CAN SMELL 'UM. WE'RE NOT TURNIN' BACK TILL HIS HEAD'S HANGIN' ON MY POLE.

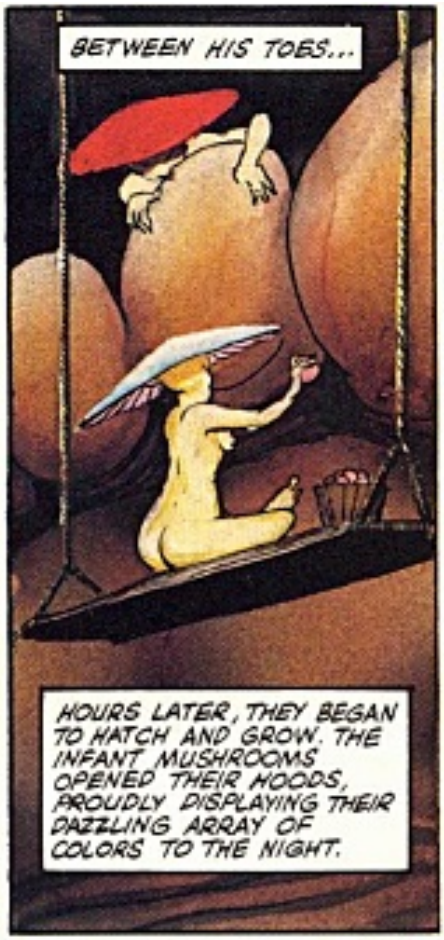
YEAH, BUT NOBODY FROM OUR TRIBE'S COME DIS FAR BEFORE. I DON'T LIKE DIS PLACE... IT GIVES ME DA CREEPS.

"MERCY!" PLEADED THE DRONES. "WE HAVE SLAIN THE ACCURSED SURFACE DEMON. NOW WE HAVE A PLAN. HIS BODY IS VERY FERTILE. IF WE PLANT SPORES ON HIM WE CAN GROW THOUSANDS OF NEW MUSHROOMS. SURELY, THERE WOULD BE AT LEAST ONE QUEEN."

AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, THE EMPEROR AGREED... BUT ONLY IF, BY THE FOLLOWING DAY, THEY BROUGHT HIM A NEW QUEEN.



HIS NOSE...


BETWEEN HIS TOES...
HOURS LATER, THEY BEGAN TO HATCH AND GROW. THE INFANT MUSHROOMS OPENED THEIR HOODS, PROUDLY DISPLAYING THEIR DAZZLING ARRAY OF COLORS TO THE NIGHT.

UNTIL...
A QUEEN! A QUEEN!

SHE WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING THE KING HAD SEEN. FOR HOURS, HE SAT MOTIONLESS, ADMIRING HIS NEW MATE. NEWS OF THE QUEEN'S BIRTH SPREAD THROUGH THE KINGDOM. FROM ALL DIRECTIONS, THEY CAME TO SEE HER...

SUDDENLY, THE GOON BEGAN TO MOVE.
≈UGGGGKHHHHH≈
?
?!!!
?!

SAY... DID YOU HEAR DAT ?
NO, I DIDN'T HEAR NUTTIN'. CUT IT OUT... YOU'RE MAKIN' ME NERVOUS.

I TELL YA I HEARD SOMETHIN' OUT DERE. I KNEW WE NEVER SHOULDA COME DIS FAR..ALL FOR ONE STINKIN...
HE AWOKE...
WHAT THE...
H-HEAD! GROWIN' OUTTA DA GROUND!
YAAAAAAAA! A CREEP!
ARRRRRR-AGGGGHH!

AHHHHHHHH!
AIEEEEEE!
YAWN!!

?!!

HEAPS
HEAPS
HEAPS

METAMORPHOSIS ODYSSEY

ZA!

CHAPTER II

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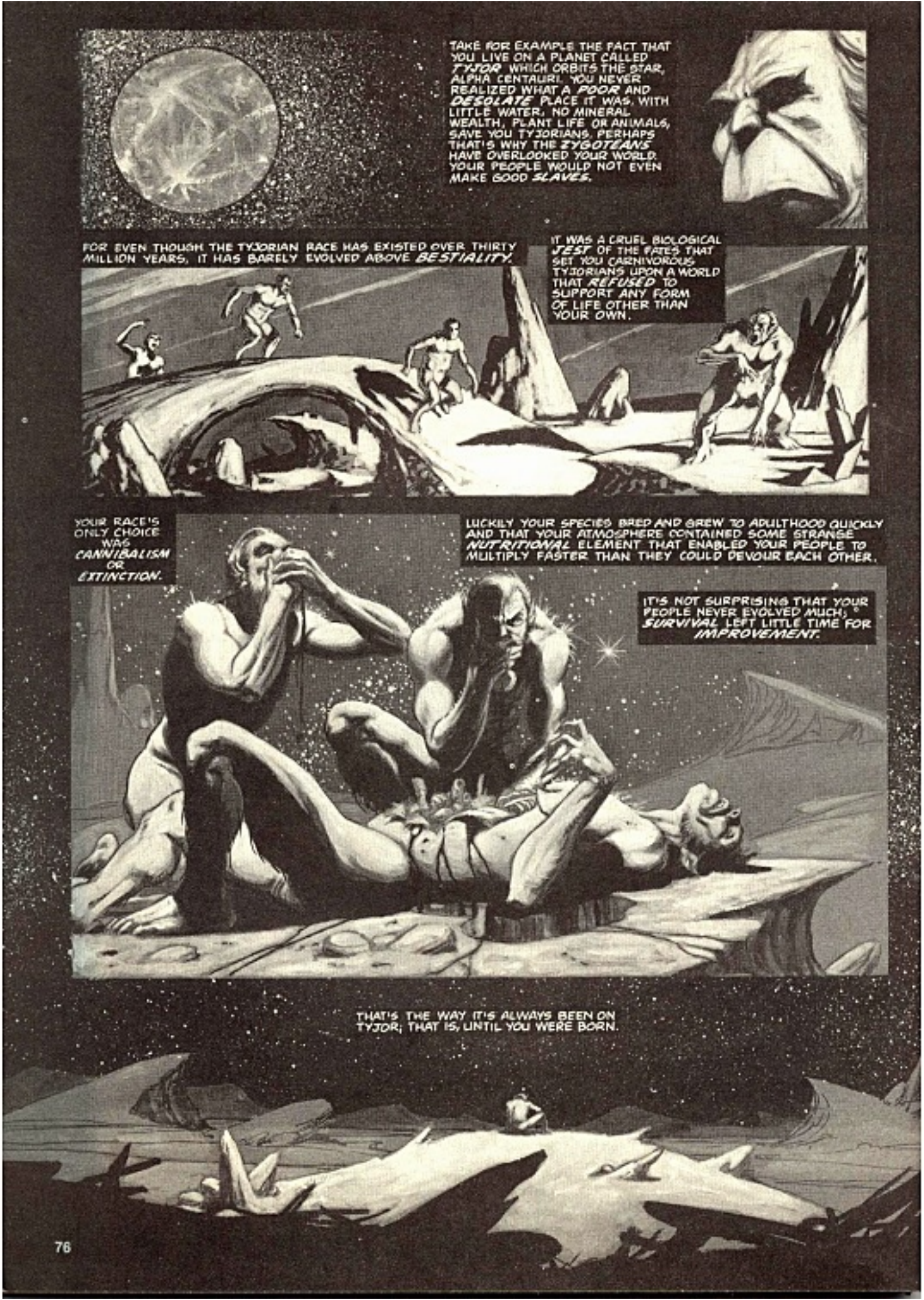

TAKE FOR EXAMPLE THE FACT THAT YOU LIVE ON A PLANET CALLED TYJOR WHICH ORBITS THE STAR, ALPHA CENTAURI. YOU NEVER REALIZED WHAT A POOR AND DESOLATE PLACE IT WAS. WITH LITTLE WATER, NO MINERAL WEALTH, PLANT LIFE OR ANIMALS, SAVE YOU TYJORIANS. PERHAPS THAT'S WHY THE ZYGOTEANS HAVE OVERLOOKED YOUR WORLD. YOUR PEOPLE WOULD NOT EVEN MAKE GOOD SLAVES.
FOR EVEN THOUGH THE TYJORIAN RACE HAS EXISTED OVER THIRTY MILLION YEARS, IT HAS BARELY EVOLVED ABOVE BESTIALITY.
IT WAS A CRUEL BIOLOGICAL JEST OF THE FATES THAT SET YOU CARNIVOROUS TYJORIANS UPON A WORLD THAT REFUSED TO SUPPORT ANY FORM OF LIFE OTHER THAN YOUR OWN.
YOUR RACE'S ONLY CHOICE WAS CANNIBALISM OR EXTINCTION.
LUCKILY YOUR SPECIES BREED AND GREW TO ADULTHOOD QUICKLY AND THAT YOUR ATMOSPHERE CONTAINED SOME STRANGE NUTRITIONAL ELEMENT THAT ENABLED YOUR PEOPLE TO MULTIPLY FASTER THAN THEY COULD DEVOUR EACH OTHER.
IT'S NOT SURPRISING THAT YOUR PEOPLE NEVER EVOLVED MUCH; SURVIVAL LEFT LITTLE TIME FOR IMPROVEMENT.
THAT'S THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN ON TYJOR; THAT IS, UNTIL YOU WERE BORN.

LIFE IN THE BEGINNING WAS SO GOOD, WAS IT NOT? YOUR MOTHER HAD NOT YET GOTTEN THE IDEA INTO HER HEAD TO EAT YOU AND HER MILK WAS LIFE ITSELF.

ALL WAS GOOD AND WARM UNTIL THE DAY SHE TRIED BREAKING YOU OFF THE BREAST AND INTRODUCED YOU TO THE PLEASURE OF FRESHLY HUNTED MEAT. YOU WERE REVOLTED BY THE TASTE AND SMELL, BUT ATE BECAUSE IT WAS EXPECTED OF YOU.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER, YOU FOUND THAT YOUR FELLOW TYJORIANS WERE A TASTE YOU'D NEVER ACQUIRE.

FORTUNATELY, YOU HAD THE WISDOM OF YOUTH AND THE INFANT HABIT OF STICKING ANYTHING WITHIN REACH INTO YOUR MOUTH.
THUS YOU ESCAPED STARVATION BY DISCOVERING THAT THE BLUISH CHRYSTALS WHICH DOTTED YOUR WORLD WAS FOR YOU--LIFE.

SOON AFTERWARDS YOUR MOTHER HAD ENOUGH MATERNAL INSTINCT BURNING WITHIN HER TO OVERRIDE HER BASER HUNGER AND ABANDONED YOU TO ADULTHOOD, AVOIDING THE BANDS OF CARNIVOROUS TYJORIANS THAT CONSTANTLY STALKED THEIR OWN.

YOU RAN WITH NO BAND, SO THE ODDS WERE AGAINST YOUR SURVIVING. BUT OBVIOUSLY SOME TYJORIAN GOD SMILED UPON YOU, FOR YOU GREW INTO A FINE SPECIMEN OF TYJORIAN MANHOOD.

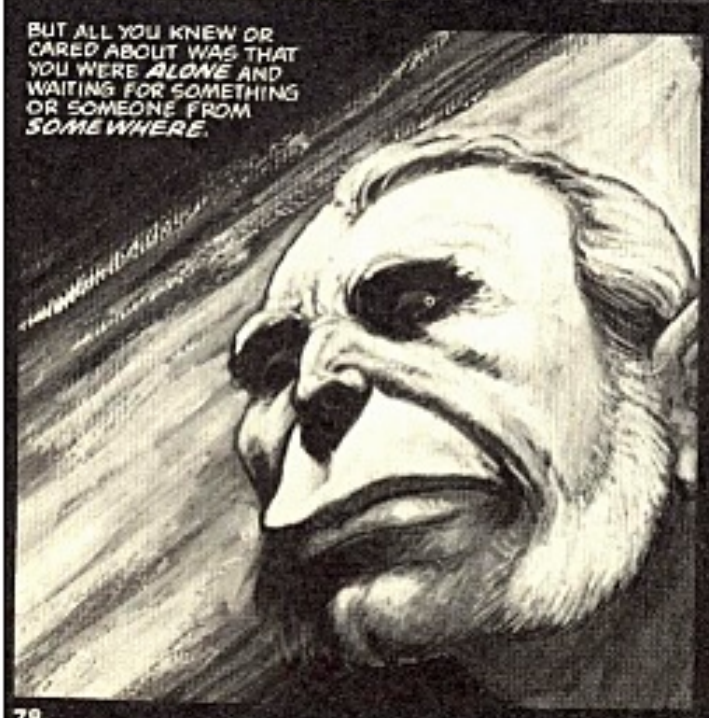
BUT YOU GREW ALONE AND LONELY.
YOU REALIZED EVEN THEN THAT YOU WERE DIFFERENT.

HOW DIFFERENT DIDN'T BECOME APPARENT UNTIL SOMETIME LATER.
THEY WERE UPON YOU, BITING AND TEARING, BEFORE YOU WERE EVEN AWARE OF THEM.

YOU REACTED WITHOUT THINKING.

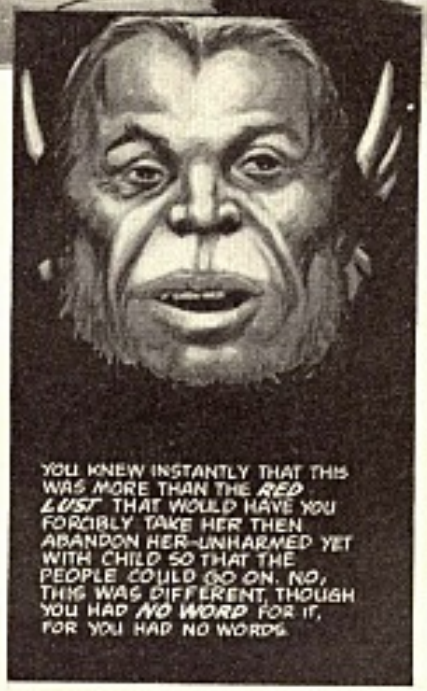
YOU SURVIVED.

YOU WERE SURPRISED AT HOW STRONG YOU WERE. EVEN THEN YOU DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY TEN TYJORIAN MALES.
IT WAS YOUR DIET OF BLUE CRYSTAL THAT MADE YOU SO.


BUT ALL YOU KNEW OR CARED ABOUT WAS THAT YOU WERE ALONE AND WAITING FOR SOMETHING OR SOMEONE FROM SOMEWHERE.

SO YOU WANDERED OFF AIMLESSLY KNOWING THAT WHAT LAY BEHIND WAS LOST AND EMPTY, HOPING THAT WHAT WAITED AHEAD WAS... WELL, NOT SO BAD.

IT WASN'T THAT LONG AFTERWARDS THAT YOU SAW HER.


YOU KNEW INSTANTLY THAT THIS WAS MORE THAN THE RED LUST THAT WOULD HAVE YOU FORCIBLY TAKE HER THEN ABANDON HER-UNHARMED YET WITH CHILD SO THAT THE PEOPLE COULD GO ON. NO, THIS WAS DIFFERENT, THOUGH YOU HAD NO WORD FOR IT, FOR YOU HAD NO WORDS.

YOU BEGAN BY SCAVENGING FOOD FOR HER. SHE FEARED YOU BUT ACCEPTED IT.

FEAR TURNED TO SOMETHING ELSE WHEN YOU DROVE OFF THOSE WHO WOULD HAVE MADE A MEAL OF HER.

THE SHORT TIME THAT FOLLOWED WAS SHEER BLISS. YOUR POOR BESTIAL MIND, IN ITS OWN WAY, PRAYED IT WOULD NEVER END.

THEN ONE DAY WHILE YOU WERE FORAGING FOR HER... YOU SUDDENLY SENSED IT... YOU KNEW IT... YOU RACED BACK TO HER...

BUT IT WAS TOO LATE.

ONCE AGAIN THE *LONELINESS* RETURNED, NOW WORSE THAN EVER, FOR THE PAIN WAS NOW BONDED TO A *LOSS*, SOUL DEEP.

SOMETHING HAD AWAKENED WITHIN *YOU* THAT NATURE HAD NEVER MEANT FOR A TYJORIAN TO *FEEL*.

IT TORE FROM WITHIN YOUR MIGHTY FRAME. IT ECHOED WITHIN YOUR HEAD. THERE WAS NO WAY TO STOP THE *PAIN* FOR ITS CAUSE HAD *NO DEFINITION*.

SO YOU CLIMBED HIGH INTO THE CLOUD SHROUDED PEAKS PLANNING TO END THE *TORTURE* IN ONE MAD PLUNGE...

...BUT INSTEAD FOUND UNDERSTANDING AND A *NAME* FOR THE PAIN.

I AM LORD AKNATON OF ORSIROS. I AM THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR TORMENT. I HAD NO CHOICE.
I AM SORRY.
HOW IS IT THAT I UNDERSTAND YOUR WORDS, MAN-GOD?
HOW IS IT THAT I UNDERSTAND SO MUCH?
MINE IS THE POWER TO BESTOW KNOWLEDGE AND THE ABILITY TO VOICE IT.
THE STARS HAVE NEED OF A MONSTER WITH A MIND AND A SOUL.
THAT IS WHY YOU ARE.
THERE IS A DARKNESS THAT SPREADS ACROSS THE GEMS OF THE NIGHT. IT CANNOT BE STOPPED.
IT MUST BE DESTROYED.

COME, MY BESTIAL FRIEND, AND FLY THE HEAVENS WITH ME.

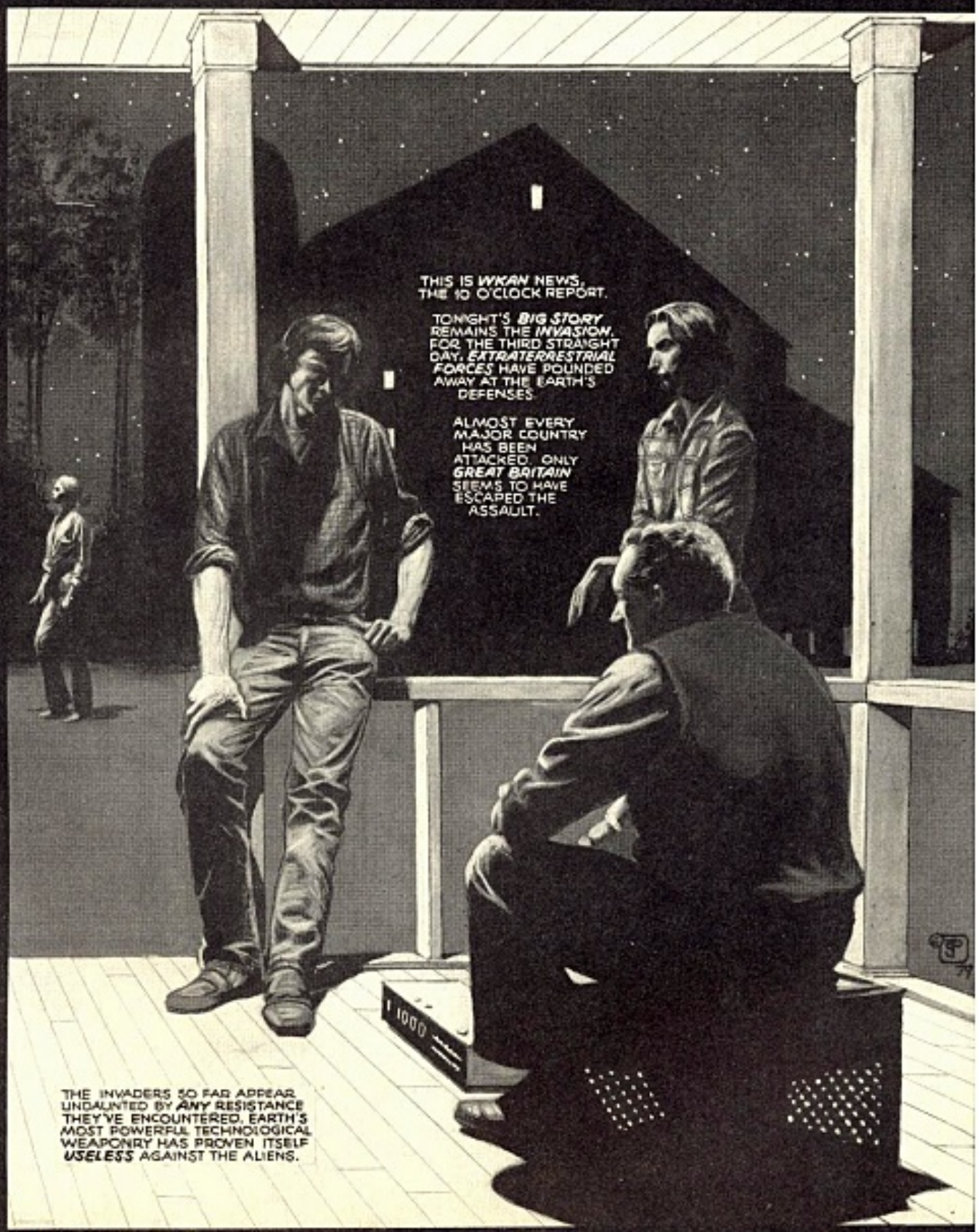
WE'VE NOT FAR TO GO, BUT HAVE LITTLE TIME.

WHERE ARE WE BOUND FOR?

METAMORPHOSIS ODYSSEY

CHAPTER III

Juliet



REPORTS HAVE IT THAT *NEW YORK CITY* HAS FALLEN AND IS BURNING. IF SO, THIS MAKES IT THE *16th* MAJOR U.S. CITY NOW IN ENEMY HANDS.

AROUND THE WORLD, THE *U.S.S.R.* IS REPORTED TO HAVE COLLAPSED UNDER THE HIGHLY DEVASTATING ASSAULT IT'S BEEN SUBJECTED TO FROM THE ONSET OF ALIEN AGGRESSIONS.

ALL COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE *PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA* HAVE CEASED. THE WORST IS FEARED AND THERE ARE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT THE ISLAND OF *JAPAN* HAS BEEN *SUNK*.

DISPATCHES FROM THE *OPEC NATIONS* TELL OF HUNDREDS OF MILES OF BURNING REFINERIES AND OIL FIELDS.

BUT THE *PRESIDENT* AND *CONGRESS* CONTINUED TO DEBATE TODAY ON THE FEASIBILITY OF EMPLOYING NUCLEAR WEAPONS AGAINST THE AGGRESSORS. *NO* CONCLUSION WAS REACHED.

THE *PENTAGON* CLAIMS THAT SPY SATELLITES HAVE CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT *AUSTRALIA* IS BEING USED AS A BASE OF OPERATIONS BY THE ENEMY.

TOP MILITARY OFFICIALS ARE PUSHING FOR AN IMMEDIATE *ATOMIC OFFENSIVE* ON THE DOWN-UNDER.

MEANWHILE, ON THE SPORTS SCENE, *ST. LOUIS* CLOBBERED...

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING, FRANK. IT HAS TO BE SOME KIND OF JOKE... A MISTAKE.

I... I'M AFRAID IT'S NOT A MISTAKE OR A JOKE. GOD HELP US, I THINK IT'S REAL!

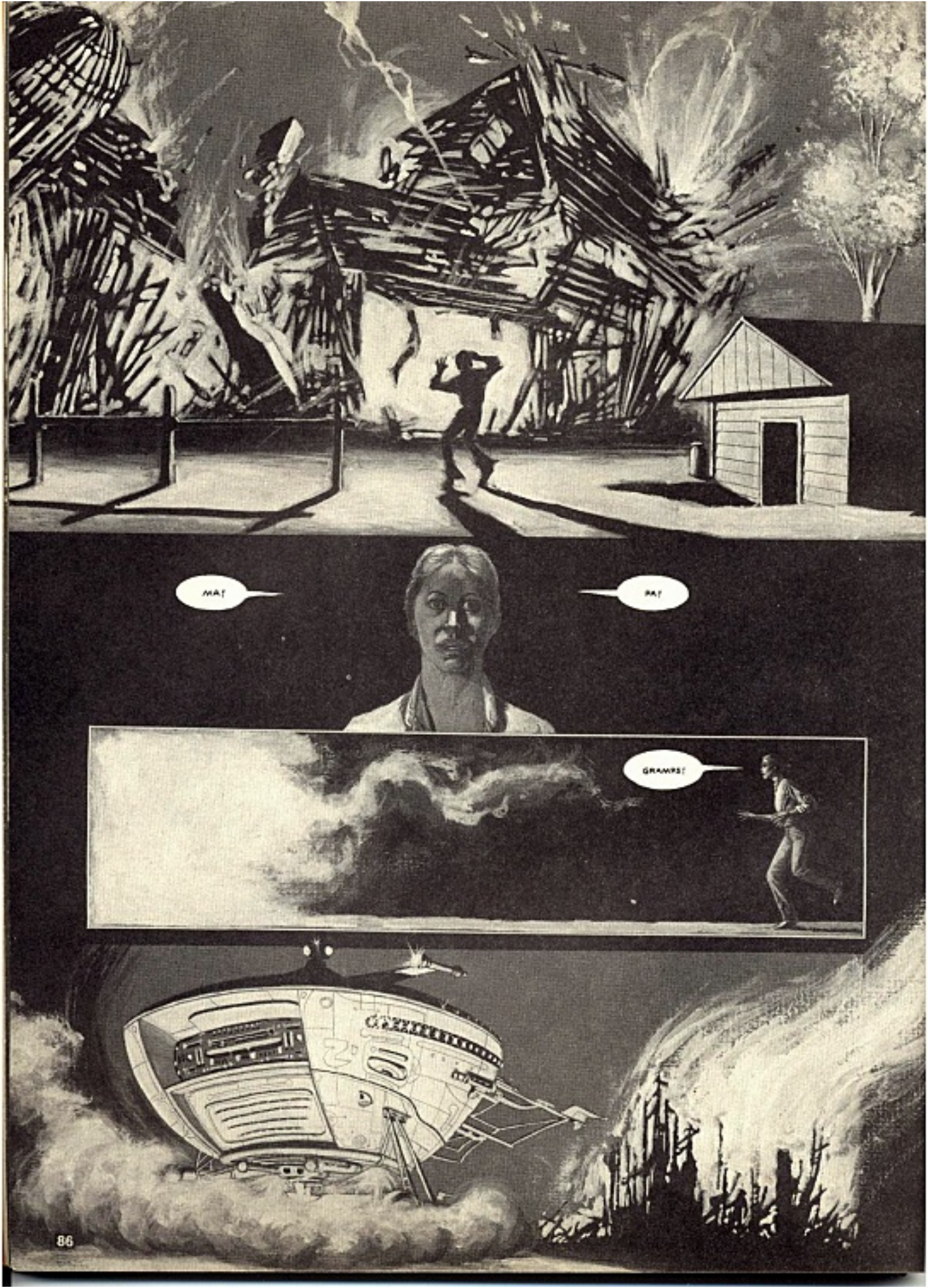
OH FRANK, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
I DON'T KNOW, LAURIE. I JUST DON'T KNOW.

JULIE...
FRANK, WHAT ABOUT JULIE?! SHE'S ONLY 15 YEARS OLD.
SURE, THINGS LOOK BAD, BUT THEY LOOKED BAD BACK IN DECEMBER '41 AND THE U.S. ARMY GOT US OUT OF THAT FIX.
DON'T YOU TWO THINK YOU'RE GETTING A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY THERE?
THEY'LL DO THE SAME NOW.
YOU REALLY THINK SO, POP?
NOW, HOLD ON THERE!
SURE! BESIDES, THOSE FLYING SAUCERS ARE ATTACKING BIG CITIES. WHAT WOULD THEY WANT HERE IN COVERT, KANSAS?

WE'VE GOT NO CITIES OR MILITARY BASES WITHIN MILES OF US HERE. ALL COVERT HAS IS WHEAT, COWS AND FARMERS.

NOW WHY WOULD ANY ALIEN COME POKING AROUND HERE? WHY, THEY... THEY...

OH, SHIT!


MA!
PA!
GRAMPS!

THIS IS ZYGOTEAN LANDING PARTY 617. CO-ORDINATE 18°-53R SECURED.
BRING IN THE FUEL FLEET.

THIS WILL MAKE AN EXCELLENT LANDING DEPOT. LEVEL TERRAIN, SUPERB ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS FOR VISIBILITY AND...
CAPTAIN GUOLABOU!

A NATIVE, FEMALE ADOLESCENT... MUST HAVE MISSED HER IN THE CLEAN-UP...

...ELIMINATE HER.

YES SIR, IMMEDIATELY.

ARRRG!

AN ORSIROSIAN!

GRAB UP THE GIRL, ZA, THEN BACK OFF.

THIS ZYGOTEAN MERCENARY AND I HAVE MATTERS TO SETTLE.

INDEED WE DO...

...YOU PULSAR-SUCKING OBSTRUCTIONIST!

ARRRG!

BY RA'S HOLY EYE, I HAD FORGOTTEN HOW QUICK YOU JACKALS FROM DELTA-7 ARE.

FORTUNATELY, YOUR *AIM* IS ALSO TYPICALLY DELTIAN... *PATHETIC.*

MASTER ANKATON, *YOU'RE INJURED.*

YES, THANKS TO MY OWN PRIDE AND FOOLISHNESS.

DUELING WITH A DELTIAN, WHAT MONUMENTAL *STUPIDITY!*

WE'LL TEND TO MY ARM LATER. WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE.

THE *ZYGOTEAN FLEET* WILL BE HERE MOMENTARILY AND...

...I'VE A *SURPRISE* PREPARED FOR THEM.

THEN YOU... *AREN'T* WITH THE INVADERS.

NO CHILD, WE ARE YOUR ENEMY'S *ENEMY.*

I AM *ANKATON* OF ORSIROS AND...

...MY FRIEND'S NAME IS ZA. WE'VE COME TO RESCUE YOU.
BUT I CAN'T LEAVE EARTH NOW. IT'S AT WAR. I'D BE A DESERTER.

YOUR WORLD IS DOOMED, GIRL. IT HAS NO CHANCE OF SURVIVING THE ZYGOTEAN ONSLAUGHT.
BUT...

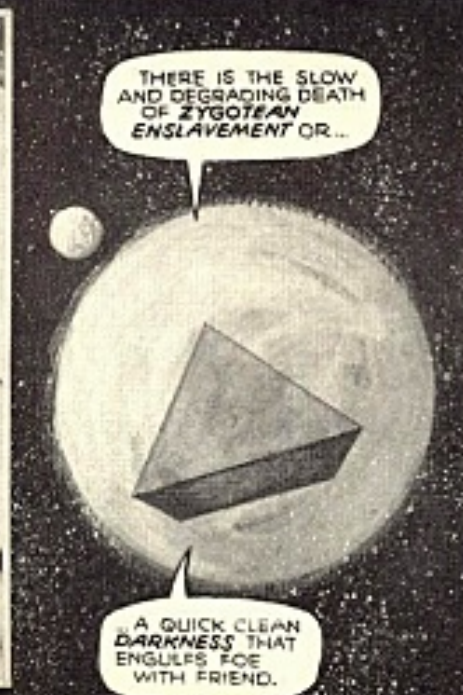
YOUR STAYING WOULD ONLY ADD ONE MORE SOUL TO THE TRILLIONS LOST BENEATH THE CONQUERING ZYGOTEAN HEEL.
WHY ME?

WHY IS IT YOU CHOSE TO SAVE ONLY ME?
FOR I SENSED DESTINY HAS GRANTED YOU CERTAIN GIFTS.

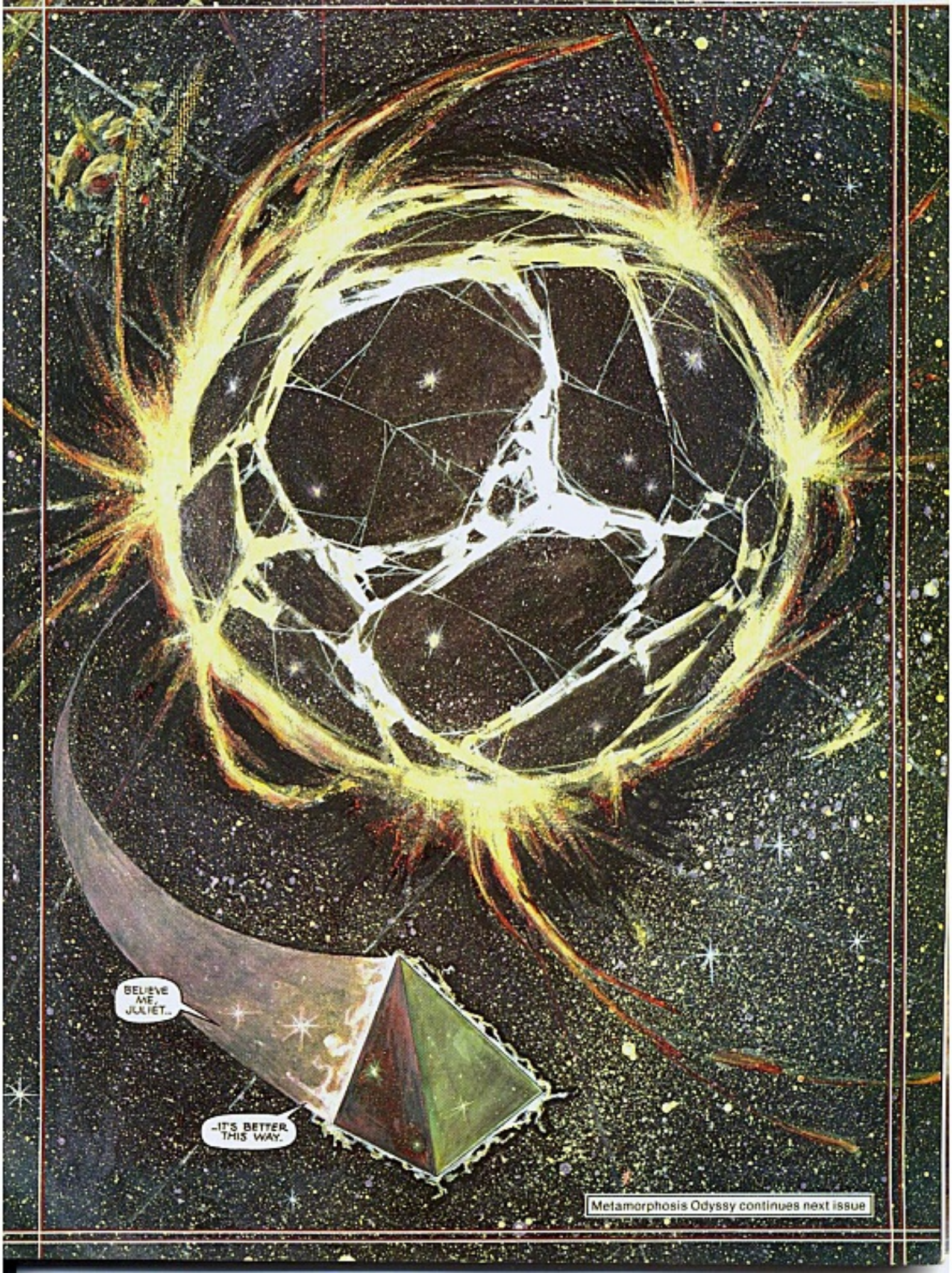
QUALITIES I NEED TO HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF ZYGOTEISM.

"THE ZYGOTEANS ARE A SOULLESS AND DERANGED RACE THAT ARE PERVERTING AND DESTROYING THE GALAXY FOR THEIR OWN TWISTED REASONS.
"THEY MUST BE STOPPED.
"YOU CAN HELP STOP THEM."

BUT EARTH...
...AS I SAID, IS DOOMED. BUT THERE ARE DIFFERENT SHADES OF DEATH.


THERE IS THE SLOW AND DEGRADING DEATH OF ZYGOTEAN ENSLAVEMENT OR...
...A QUICK CLEAN DARKNESS THAT ENGULFS FOE WITH FRIEND.

DEATH CAUSED BY SIMULTANEOUS DETONATION OF YOUR WORLD'S ENTIRE STOCKPILE OF ATOMIC WEAPONS.



Metamorphosis Odyssy continues next issue

TOPAZ

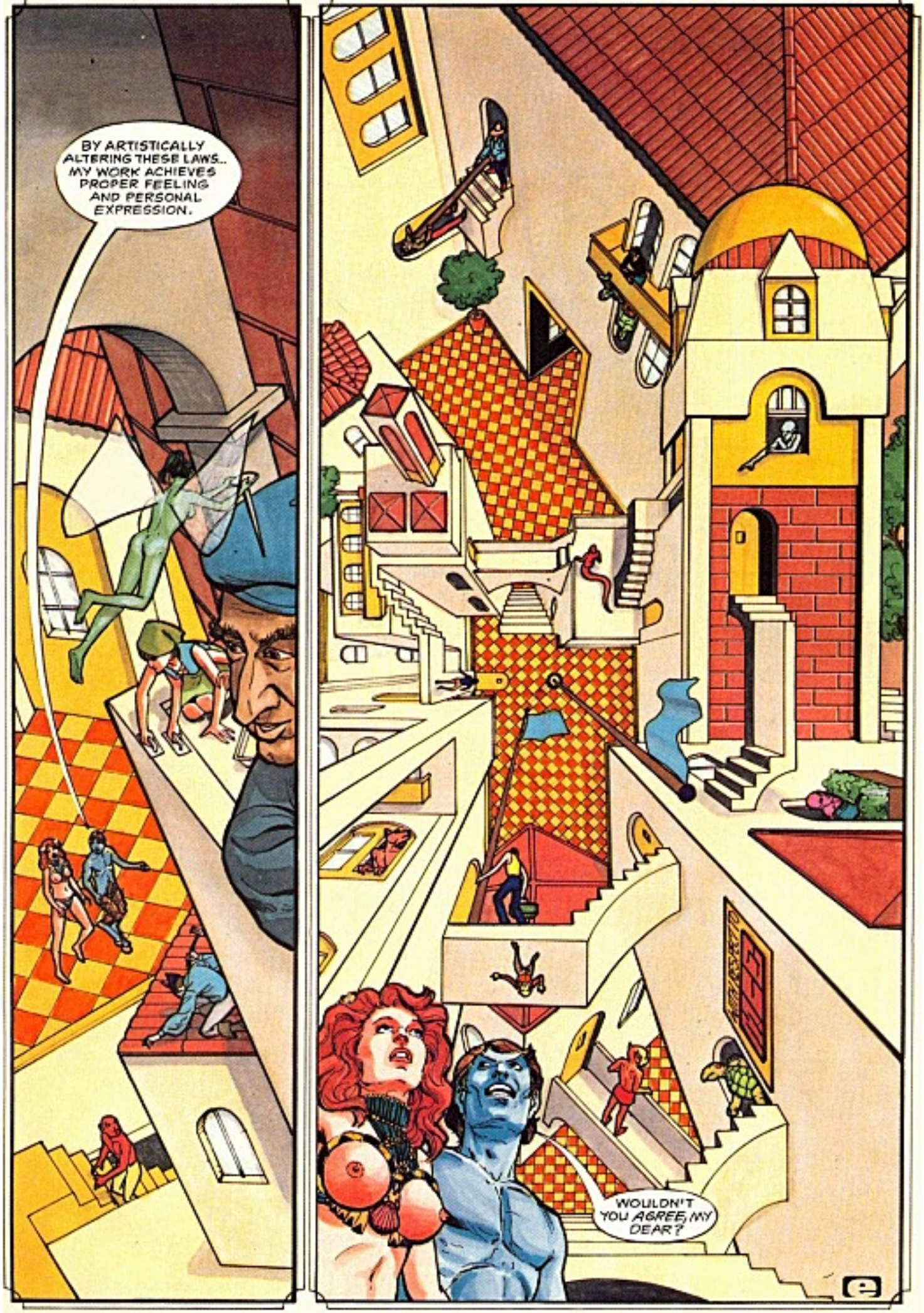
BY CARL POTS

MY VAST AND VARIED ARRAY OF FRIENDS HAVE TOILED LONG AND HARD...
...ALL JUST FOR THE HONOR OF WORKING ON MY GREATEST CREATION.

BY SUNSET YOU WILL BE LIVING IN THE MOST UNIQUE DWELLING EVER CONSTRUCTED!

YOU SEEM TO TAKE SO MUCH PRIDE IN YOUR WORK...
INDEED I DO!

YOU KNOW, AN ARCHITECT IS AN *ARTIST*... AND THE BEST ARTIST KNOWS WHEN TO *VIOLATE* CONVENTIONAL LAWS OF DESIGN AND OTHER ASPECTS OF GRAPHICS.


BY ARTISTICALLY ALTERING THESE LAWS.. MY WORK ACHIEVES PROPER FEELING AND PERSONAL EXPRESSION.
WOULDN'T YOU AGREE, MY DEAR?